THE Whole Duty OF NATIONS.

OR, NATIONAL TRUE RELIGION

Argued and perſwaded upon

Greateſt Motives of Scripture and Reaſon.

Conciliated

To all moderate Apprehenſions, though differing in ſmaller Things.

And to the ſtricteſt notion of Churches.

By a Miniſter of the Catholick Church as it is National in *England*.

Rom. 11. 13.

Foraſmuch as I am the Apoſtle of the Nations, *I magnifie my Office.*

LONDON,

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TO THE

READER.

THE only Deſign of the Enſuing Diſcourſe is, to Eſtabliſh ſuch Principles as upon which may riſe the nearest Agreement betwixt all the truly Religious of this Nation; ſeeing ſuch an agreement is, and muſt be the great ſtrength of the National Religious Intereſt, *the greateſt of* Intereſts *to a* Nation.

For ſuch an agreement renders the National Religion *moſt* acceptable to God, *moſt excellent, and worthy in it ſelf, gives it greater force and vertue, to promote and propagate it ſelf into the ſenſe of thoſe that are leſs Religiouſly diſpoſed; who take advantage*

from our Diviſions to be ſo; while they obſerve in their own Defence thoſe Conteſts, wherein whoever overcomes, Religion it ſelf is ſure to loſe in its power and eſtimation, and ſo in its Attractive Virtue.

The Cure of which is moſt hopeful, by the abundance of Truth, Peace, *and* Love, *running down in our Nation,* as the mighty waters.

So the offering up of the whole Nation, in Univerſal National Religion, *will be* moſt acceptable to God, being Sanctified by the Holy Ghoſt.

ERRATA.

PAge 21. line 25. read Nations. p. 22. l. 9. r. nationalneſs. p. 24. l. 5. after ought r. not. l. 22. r. untouch'd. p. 40. l. ult. r. by. p. 42. l. 33. after permit put Comma. l. 34. r. into. p. 48. after particular dele to, Churches, in the two laſt lines. p. 54. l. 23. after deſert put Colon.

The

True Religion the Intereſt of Nations, or National Religion Demonſtrated, &c. to be the Duty of Nations.

Pſal. 79. 6. & Jer. 10. 25.

Pour out thy {*Wrath* / *Fury*} *upon the* {*Heathen* / *Nations*} *that have not known thee, and upon the* {*Kingdoms* / *Families*} *that have not called on thy Name.*

THIS Prayer *doubled* by the Spirit of God, for the weight of it, the ſafety to men, it ſhould be well known, and the *certainty* of its effect contains a ſtrong aſſertion of the great benefit of, and obligation lying upon Nations to National true Religion. Phil. 3. 2. Gen. 41. 32.

For ſeeing according to a grand Rule in Gods Adminiſtration of the World, Nations that have no National Religion, and whoſe Nationalneſs therefore becomes *Heatheniſm*, and is ſo branded by the Spirit of God, (for ſo Nations in Scripture very often ſignifies *Heathen*, that is, Nations without true Religion), are lyable to the *pouring out of the wrath and fury of God* upon them: It does not only follow by the rule of Contraries, that National true Religion, or Worſhip of the true God, hath a ſtrong order to, and connexion with the favour of God; but as the poſitive Propoſition is the prime and original, and gives ground to, and contains within it ſelf the privative; ſo does this Propoſition, That Gods *Anger* and *Fury* is at all times ready againſt thoſe that do *not know him*, that do not *call upon him* as join'd in a *National Body*, or *Society*, being the

privative, owe it self to the other, being the positive; as shall be more fully made out in the arguing this Point.

At the present, it will be enough to observe, that these two Holy men, the *Composer of this Psalm*, and the Prophet *Jeremy* (except as some think they were both one), desiring the destruction of those Heathen enemies under whose oppression their own people (which at that time comprehended the Church of God) then groan'd, and praying *in spirit* for it, relye and rest the whole weight of their prayer upon this principle of great truth and consequence in Gods Government of the World, that as *Families*, as *Nations*, as *Kingdoms*, (for so all Communities are comprehended) they did not *know* nor *call* upon *God*, that is, they did not worship the *true God*; and therefore were most justly subject to his fiercest displeasure.

And on the other side, it is couched under this, though indeed before it, That the people that do know and call upon the true God, have a title to his favour, and vindication of them in all their distress, while they are consider'd as so *knowing*, and calling upon him, and not contradicting it by their actions. The Context therefore goes on arguing with God on this point, *They have devoured Jacob*, in whose quarrel and rescue God is so much concern'd.

And seeing the favour of God is Eternal Life, and his wrath burns to the lowest Hell; both his wrath and his favour are to be understood in their extent even to everlasting ages.

All which will ground the Proposition, which I mainly intend in this Discourse.

That National true Religon is the greatest security, strength and defence of a Nation against the Divine wrath and displeasure, and gives the surest claim to his favour, blessing and protection, both in this world, and in that which is to come. Because it is an observation of the greatest duty; and therefore to be most closely united in, and pursued to the utmost by all wise Nations, and by all the several parts, and members of a Nation; for it is their first and highest Interest: *Blessed is the Nation that is in such a case, yea happy is the people whose God is the Lord, who have Jehovah* thus *for their God*,

Psal. 33 12 & 144. 15.

And this very consideration should reconcile all differences in National Religion, that can be composed without loss of that Truth, and corruption of those parts of the Worship of God, which give denomination to true National Religion.

This should incline those that are above, to the greatest condescensions, and those that are beneath to the most free compliances

possible

poſſible, if they value Religion, and love their Nation, that at leaſt there may be union in National Religion, if there cannot be perfect Uniformity. For I am fully perſwaded, that upon a ſtrict examination of this Point, it will be found that National Religion (ſuppoſing it always the true) is the happieſt model of union in Religion of any upon earth, and moſt pleaſing to God, except that of the *Catholick Church*, whoſe union is in the Subſtantials of Truth, worſhip and practiſe, but comes under no other form or model properly taken: but except this, there is none ſo perfect to the ends and glory of Religion, ſo adæquate to the expreſſions of Scripture concerning the publickneſs of Religion, ſo encouraging and advantageous to the practiſe, ſo reconcileable with the peace of Religion and Nations, ſo preventive of the endleſs diviſions, and ſubdiviſions Humane Nature is apt to fall into, when it yields up it ſelf to a ſcrupuloſity, and Diſputatiouſneſs about Externals and Forms in Religion.

I ſay again, I am perſwaded no man can ſerve God with greater acceptableneſs, nor be Religious to greater ends and purpoſes of Religion, than by joining with the Nation, or Supream Civil Incorporation, whereof he is a member, ſo far as he can be permitted to do it, conſiſtent with the Truth of Religion, and Divine Worſhip. I ſay, as far as he can upon theſe accounts, if not throughout.

And of this I ſhall endeavour to give great and valuable proofs from Scripture, and Reaſon agreeable to it, and deduced from it; and herein being a *Miniſter of God* according to the *National Religion, I magnifie my Office*. Rom. 11. 13.

To this purpoſe I will firſt conſider of the Radical obligation we have to join our ſelves with others in the profeſſion of Religion, and Worſhip of God, and how it riſes from Perſonal Religion, the *Subſtratum* or foundation of all; and by what degrees it muſt and ought to riſe, and how it moſt rationally determines it ſelf in National Religion. It ought to attempt thus high, and cannot ſucceſsfully attempt higher in the way of Aſſociation; to ſpread thus far, and cannot expatiate to any purpoſe beyond it: I ſhall therefore here give ſuch Arguments for *National Religion* out of Scripture, as it does not afford to any other figure of union in it.

In the firſt place therefore it neceſſarily muſt be ſuppos'd and granted, That Perſonal Religion is the Fundamental Religion; even as a Nation, or even Univerſality of Humane Nature muſt become a notion without particular perſons, in whom all Communities ſubſiſt; even ſo muſt *National*, or *Catholick Religion* vaniſh into imagination,

if it were not ſuſtained by particular and Perſonal piety; *Nations* and *Families calling upon God*, moſt neceſſarily imply and include the particular perſons of each doing ſo.

And herein it is further conſiderable, that every man is a compleat Being within himſelf; that as it is ſaid of him, He is in his Soul and Body a little World within himſelf, ſo he is a Kingdom, a Society within himſelf; and we may ſay in this ſenſe, He is a Church within himſelf alſo, as *Solomon* calling himſelf *Coheleth*, the Congregating or the *Preaching ſoul*, in that great Treaty with himſelf, ſuppos'd his ſoul a Congregation, and a Preacher within and to it ſelf firſt, and then to the publick; ſo ought every man to be to himſelf.

Eccleſiaſtes.

Here therefore is the firſt inviolable duty and obligation to Religion, becauſe a man can never be abſent from himſelf; and it is impoſſible for any force to ſurprize the paſſages of a ſoul to Heaven, or to hinder the ſouls Congregating in Holy Meditations, and Diſcourſes within it ſelf.

And as a man is thus conſider'd, he cannot nor ought to ſuffer himſelf to be impos'd upon, or commanded without Divine Authority; for as thus conſider'd, he cannot be forced by any, and he is accountable only to God: *He ſtands or falls to his own Maſter: Every one ſhall give account of himſelf to God*; which is one of the greateſt Arguments the *Apoſtle* inſiſts upon for mutual forbearance in diſputable things in Religion; every man on this account ought to be able to *render a reaſon of the hope that is in him*, to himſelf and others; and not to reſt in an *implicite faith*. It will be no mans excuſe he was led or commanded into a falſe Faith, or Idolatrous worſhip.

Rom. 14. 4, 12.

1 Pet. 3. 15

Every man alſo upon this ſame account is bound *to make confeſſion with his mouth to ſalvation* in his proper place and ſtation; and in a narrower ſenſe, yet a ſenſe as large as his capacity and rank, every true Chriſtian is a *Pillar, and Ground of Truth*; that is, Truth muſt be ſetled, and ſtrongly ſeated in his ſoul, and he muſt expoſe Truth, and bear it out in Confeſſion and holy practiſe, and is himſelf a Temple or Houſe of the living God, where God will pleaſe to walk and dwell; and therefore can be no way obliged to join with a Family, or any ſort of larger Community in a falſe Religion, though he ſhould ſtand alone in the true, or ſhould, as *Abraham*, forſake his *People*, or *his Fathers Houſe* to do it.

Rom 10. 10.

1 Tim 3. 15.

Gen. 12 1. Gen 2, 18.

Yet notwithſtanding this, *It is not good for a man to be alone*, though in true Religion, if it can be otherwiſe; he is made for Society,

Society and is, as it were, imperfect without it: Herein he reſembles God in ſome low degree, in whoſe *Image* and *likeneſs* he is made. God is an infinitely perfect Being in himſelf, yet he hath pleaſed himſelf in communicativeneſs to all his Creatures, and in the attraction of all in their ſeveral kinds, eſpecially *Angels* and *Men* to himſelf; as if he was not ſatisfied in being holy, in being happy alone.

Thus man, though if he could not have ſociety in True Religion, he would be yet a complete and abſolute Figure alone; yet where, and ſo far as he can have ſociety in it, he is ſo far from being complete alone, that he muſt needs prove a Cypher, a Nothing, if he affected and coveted to be alone: Whatever he has, if he has not *Love*, he is *nothing*; *God is Love*, and therefore rejoyces in communication from himſelf and with himſelf, and ſo muſt, ſo does every good man, every holy man alſo.

If there be True Perſonal Religion, there muſt be Religious Society, for Man is made for Society; and if he meets, he muſt meet with that Religious Senſe he has upon himſelf, with that I ſay he muſt meet with others which ſeems the abſolute neceſſity of Religious Society. For if a man meets with his own Religion others that have the ſame ſenſe of Religion, there ariſes a neceſſity of the Religion of all to meet togerher.

But further, Man was made for Society, and the firſt and ſupreme end of ſociety, as of all things, is the glory of God; and therefore ſociety is in the firſt place bound to be Religious ſociety. Marriage the Root and beginning of ſociety, was, that there might be *a godly ſeed*, *Mal.* 2. 15. to ſuſtain a Succeſſion of Religion: So ſociety ſpreads on ſtill, that there might be Religious Socieeies.

As ſoon therefore as *Seth*, the firſt Deſcendent from *Adam* in the holy Line, had a Son born in the ſame Line, it is recorded, that *Then Men began to call upon the Name of* Jehovah, that is moſt probably, *Adam* and *Seth* took it as a juſt and neceſſary occaſion, not only to ſet up a pillar of Thankfulneſs in ſeeing themſelves the Progenitors of the *bleſſed Seed*, but in the foreſight of a holy ſociety, juſt ready to ſpring from their loyns, they thought fit to promote Divine Worſhip into a publick State and certain Order; and this I think the moſt agreeable Interpretation of that controverted place: ſo that from the beginning of the world, all along the Hiſtory of True Religion in the Old and New Teſtament, we ſhall find Religion contended into publickneſs, and all the advantages of Humane Society. Gen. 4. ult.

Yea

Yea Humane Nature hath taken this ſo for granted, that it is doubtful whether there ever was a ſociety in the world, politically united or not wholly barbarous, but it was cemented in Religion, though being ſo generally but falſe Religion, it proved no better than Heatheniſm.

There may have been private Cabals of Atheiſm, but there never was a publick Aſſociation againſt *A God*, except in Hell. If we could ſuppoſe a Society deſignedly united without Religion, it would be like the Plot for building of *Babel*, an endeavour of ſuch a part of mankind to ſet up for its ſelf and its own ſecurity, as it were in defyance of Heaven.

A Society united in Civils, and crumbled into Sects and Diviſions in Religion, that is, in the main ſubſtantials of Doctrine, Worſhip, and Practice, is a *Babel*, as it was under the curſe of Confuſion, of divided Language; A diſparagement of Religion, which can be as it is indeed Religion, but one; as if its *Name* were *Legion*, or as if in fundamental points it could not ſufficiently evidence it ſelf, ſo as to be known to be the true: Laſtly a diſanulling the ancient Law of Society, which is principally for the Union of Religion; ſo that if men could agree in all things elſe, and were yet divided here, it were not true humane ſociety, but would want the very nobleſt part or Principle of it, Religion, which is as a ſoul or ſpirit to it.

Yet too rigorous and ſevere a conſtraint of Uniformity, is both to forget humane infirmity, that does not allow ſo perfect an union in this world, (if a rigid Uniformity be indeed perfection) and to forget alſo that every man is a complete Being within himſelf, and makes a perfect Figure as he is alone; and therefore to grant nothing to this conſideration, is rather to crowd men into a *Little eaſe* in Religion, than to unite them; and ſo preſſing them too ſtrait, makes them fly out of that uneaſie ſtate for more room, and diſſolves the union that might elſe have been.

But in all the principal points of True Religion, Union is ſo neceſſary, that it ſtands good; *Humane ſociety is for the ſake of Religion*; yet in this ſtate of Gods patience to the world, Commerce, and civil Converſation are no more than Property founded in Grace, for then we muſt *go out of the world*, yet ſtill the ſupreme and prime end of Society is Religion.

Society in Divine Adorations is the ſtate of *Angels* and *Saints* in Heaven: It was deſigned to be the State of Innocency in this world. It is a Law that cannot be repealed; It is the perpetual Duty of Man:

Man: Fallen Nature hath a violent inclination to it, ſo that all ſocieties conſent to *walk in the name of ſome God*, though miſtaken in the right object. But the word of God and Chriſtianity, as they moſt clearly reveal the True Religion, ſo the neceſſity of Union in it.

The publickneſs of Religion therefore, that it is moſt chooſable for the glory of it to God, for the good it does to the ſouls of men, for the bleſſing and acceptance it receives from God; I ſhall plainly make evident from the reaſon of Scripture.

1. For the Glory publick Religion preſents to God, it is evident, although God in his Son and Spirit is a ſufficient Spectator and Witneſs of, and infinitely rich in his own Glory, in the underſtanding of, and his own eternal praiſes of himſelf, ſo that nothing can be added to him; yet it is moſt evident, God is pleaſed to delight in the publickneſs of his ſervice, and the neareſt approach of all his Creatures to him, and that not in ſolitary ſervice, but the moſt conjoyn'd, as if infinity received Additions of Glory from the openneſs and publickneſs of his Worſhip, which yet we know is impoſſible. But it is the abyſs of his goodneſs, that he delights in loving all his creatures, and being univerſally known, loved, and ſerved by them, and that in the greateſt Union herein, that as he himſelf is the prime Unity and Univerſality, and this is the perfection of his Being; ſo his Creatures ſprung from him may return to him in the ſame Univerſality and Unity, in reſemblance of himſelf, which is the higheſt and trueſt worſhip of him.

In Heaven there is an *Innumerable company of Angels*, and *bleſſed Spirits, in one general Aſſembly*, to praiſe and worſhip God. The Scripture excites the praiſe of *all the Earth, of all the world, of all Lands, of all People, Tongues, Languages, Nations, Kindred and Families*; even the *Heaven, and Earth, and things under the Earth, and the whole hoſt of them*, are called in to concert the Glory of God, and nothing left out *but Death and Deſtruction*, which *cannot praiſe him*, becauſe never made by him: And when the Glory of God, as it riſes from his Creatures, is repreſented at its higheſt pitch, it is thus ſet out: *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the Beaſts, and the Elders, and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb &c. And every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and ſuch as are in the Sea, and all that are in them I heard, ſaying, as it were in one Quire: Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and*

and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Thus *David* alſo muſters up the whole Creation to join in the praiſes of God, not to fill up and adorn the *Divine Poeſie*, but to ſhew the indiſputable right God hath to the ſervices of all his Creatures, and that in thoſe which are not able to pay it immediately by themſelves, every *wiſe* and *prudent holy man* is to obſerve that tribute of praiſe that is as it were marked upon them by the wiſdom that made them, and to offer it up for them, when the ſervice of God is repreſented, as moſt glorious in its being moſt publick.

Every thing therefore in Gods Ordination of Religion, tends to publickneſs; *Our Saviour* will not appear but in the *fulneſs of his Body*, the Church, which does as it were compleat him: For it is in this ſenſe his *Complement* or *Fulneſs*, though he fills *all in all*. The knowledg of God would cover the earth *even as water does the Sea*, and is reſtleſs, till it does; ſo the Preaching of the Goſpel is to be extended to *all Nations, to every creature*.

In Prayer there is to be a coming of all fleſh to God. Praiſe is to riſe up as one pillar of Incenſe from the whole world. The Church eſpecially is to publiſh the name of the Lord, and to aſcribe greatneſs to our God.

Now the ſenſe of this is, that ſince God hath been pleaſed to place his Glory in the publickneſs of Religion, in this Univerſality of it, all good men are zealous and earneſt to draw in the publick Societies of the world, as much as they can, to love, fear, ſerve, pray to God, and praiſe him together.

God does not allow his ſervants that out of choice they ſhould retire to the Religion of a Cloyſter, or a Wilderneſs, or a private ſeparated Aſſembly, as the greateſt honour to him, but delights in the moſt publick Aſſemblies of his Saints, ſervants, and creatures; for though the reaſons hereof lye deep in the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, yet it is ſpoken to us in the plaineſt Language, as if God carryed it, as Princes do in their magnificence, whoſe Glory is in their great Courts, in the multitude of their Attendants, and People, Spectators, Admirers, and Tributaries to their luſter.

2. I argue to the publickneſs of Religion from the good it does to the ſouls of men. It is from hence the greateſt wiſdom *to win ſouls*; and they *that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars*. Now the offer of true Religion to them that had it not before, the perſwaſion of it upon thoſe that have not yet obeyed it, tends to their Con-

Converſion, Repentance, to their love and fear of God. They therefore that have the true ſenſe of theſe things in their own ſouls uſe all means out of love to the Glory of God, and to the ſouls of men to propagate them to others, which is beſt done by all publick acts of Religion: This is the original Law, from the very beginning it was ſo: *Enoch the ſeventh from Adam prophecyed* publickly, *The Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his Saints. Noah was a Preacher of Righteouſneſs.* This was the great zeal of Chriſtians in the firſt times.

Further, It ſtrengthens, confirms, and inflames Religion among thoſe that are the joynt Profeſſors: Publick Religion is the great glory and ſecurity of Religion it ſelf, mutually warming and aſſiſting it ſelf in all its ſeveral parts, and the Profeſſors of it. *As Iron ſharpens Iron, ſo is the countenance of a man to his Friend herein.* How much more lively is Religion probable to be in a Religious, than an Atheiſtick and Barbarous Country? nor does God afford thoſe divine heats to thoſe that withdraw from Aſſemblies in Religion, except in caſes of neceſſity, however he may ſupply in extraordinary exigences, without which, *Wo to him that is alone in Religion, if he fall he has not any to help him up: and how can one be warm alone? If one prevails againſt him, he wants a Second to withſtand together with him, and the benefit of the threefold cord, that is not eaſily broken.*

Every thing in nature endeavours towards Community or univerſal Unity, as its own ſtrength and ſecurity. Even the *Devils* retain ſo much of firſt Nature, as to knit in a community; and falſe Chriſtianity imitates the true in a pretence to *Univerſality*, though a moſt deſtructive one, like that of *the God of this World*, who aſpires to Univerſal Monarchy, but it is in ſin and death.

But this does not diſparage True Religion, moving to an Univerſality of Truth, Peace, and Life for evermore.

3. The bleſſing and acceptance that Religion receives from the Divine Majeſty, is much greater for the publickneſs of it; even in this ſence, *Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their labour.* In thss ſence their complicated ſervices are more forcible, *their threefold Cord is not eaſily broken.* Not that God is prevailed upon to any change in himſelf or his Government by the ſervices of his Creatures, though in a multitude; but he is pleaſed to found the occaſions and opportunities of his own moſt bountiful Recompences, in the drawing near of their greater numbers: For as

when God was pleaſed to communicate himſelf more freely, he did it to a multitude of Creatures; ſo he delights in receiving back the glory of having thus communicated himſelf from a multitude alſo; and as there is more of himſelf in more of his Creatures, whether of ſeveral ſorts or of the ſame, ſo there is more of his bleſſing in their approaches to him.

He that does not only *weigh the Mountains in ſcales, but comprehends the duſt of the earth in a meaſure*, takes notice of thoſe prayers and deſires of the *poor of the people*, that make the crowd and throng in his worſhip and ſervice: He accepts the pair of *Turtle Doves*, the *two Mites*, when it is *the All*, and is ready to reward it.

This was the policy of *Nineveh*'s Natural Religion, to unite their Force in Humiliation, Faſting, and Prayer, and to take advantage of joyning the mute deſires of the Beaſts, that have a voice in the ears of God: *Abraham*'s Servant made the *Camels kneel down* while he prayed to God.

Thus in Thankſgivings, It was *David*'s art to gather up all the praiſes, even of the loweſt of the Creatures, that could ſo meanly give them, and inſpiring them with his own reaſon, made them, as it were, to follow his Harp, and unite in his own *Hallelujahs*. Thus he ſerved himſelf of them, that making by them a greater preſent of glory to God, he might receive the greater bleſſing from him. The *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of the good effect of *Chriſtian Charity*, in cauſing an *abundance of thankſgivings to God* David ſaying, *The congregation of the people would compaſs God about*, adds this prayer; *therefore for their ſakes return thou on high.*

Now all theſe expreſſions, reporting to us a great force in the publickneſs of Religious Duties, we know it is only from the agreeableneſs of this publickneſs with the Divine Will and Nature, and his holy Ordination, who loves his *Saints*, and knows their approach to him is an approach to their life and happineſs: And becauſe he *loves all his Saints and Creatures* the more of them in conjunction draw near to him, the more of his *tender mercies* have the occaſion to ſpread themſelves; *for elſe all the Nations are to God, but as the drop of the Bucket, and the duſt of the Ballance; all their ſervices are not ſufficient to him for a ſacrifice to burn before him: He humbles himſelf to behold the things that are in Heaven, as well as thoſe on Earth.* He with great delight yet looks to one *that is of a broken and contrite ſpirit, and that trembles at his word. As one day and a thouſand years are both alike to the Infinity of God, ſo are a thouſand perſons and but one;*

as

as it is all one to him to ſave with many or few, ſo it is to be intreated by them in prayer, or accept their praiſe; but according to the wiſdom and holineſs of the Divine Manifeſtation in his Love and Bounty, ſo he is pleaſed to ſee his Servants draw near to him in an union of Love among themſelves, and every one having a claim to his favour, who is all Goodneſs, the united claim is ſtronger. *He hears even the Ravens that cry*, for they are his Creatures; if any man therefore could intwiſt their cry with his own in a general ſcarcity, he makes his own ſo much the ſtronger. He then that joyns the prayers and deſires of many with his own, doubles ſtill the ſtrength, as is manifeſt by the Apoſtles ſo often and earneſtly deſiring the help of prayers.

And this may anſwer what may ſeem to be an objection againſt good men joyning with publick and promiſcuous Aſſemblies, wherein are ſo many ignorant and bad men, that by their ſins, ignorance, and folly, rather obſtruct the effect and acceptance of good men joyning with them; ſo that it may ſeem better if holy and good men ſeparated themſelves, and left the generality of a Nation out of their Religious Services.

But from what hath been ſaid it is very plain, that as the *Ninevites* and *Abraham's Steward* ſerved themſelves of the Beaſts in their prayers, and *David* ſerved himſelf of the very loweſt of the Creatures in his praiſes, ſo good men conſecrating the *publick Religion*, though reſulting from a medley of worſe men, turn it to greater glory to God, advantage to themſelves, and the advantages of thoſe worſer men alſo, in ſundry reſpects, when it does not prevail to their converſion and eternal ſalvation; as figures of value ſubordinating to themſelves Cyphers, increaſe Sums to very vaſt.

The ſervices of men not truly Religious, are not ſo acceptable to God alone, but are ennobled by the union of truly good men; for that they have ſuch a vertue is plain; even *Job's* Friends, though good men themſelves, received good by his offering their ſacrifices, and that good men may ſubject the ſervices of evil men to their own, is as plain by the *Apoſtles* rejoycing, that *Chriſt was preached by thoſe that preached him out of envy and contention, for while his preaching Chriſt out of love*, over-ruled theirs, who *preached the ſame Chriſt* from worſer reſpects; all their preaching of Chriſt was ſo forcibly united with the Apoſtles, that it became as if it was wholly his own, & *turned to his Salvation*; the greater & truer Light drinking up the leſs, & the leſs noble which followed in attendance upon it; & ſo much more the

prayers of leſs worthy men are ſnatched up to Heaven with the prayers of Holy men, and prevail for a full acceptance of them with God, leaving only ſome leſſer portions of Bleſſing to thoſe whoſe Hearts do not aſcend with their prayers: Yet we muſt be careful of ſaying to any, *Stand off, I am holier than thou.* Many a man being rejected under the Appearance of a *Publican*, whoſe heart's breaking within it ſelf to God has greater acceptance from him, than what ſeems rather to be preferr'd among men.

For the Honour therefore of the moſt publick Conjunction in Holy Services, we may obſerve, thoſe men who are of the moſt Happy memory in Scripture, Men of Renown for the Efficacy of their prayers, as *Noah*, *Moſes*, *Samuel* *Job*, *Daniel*, the Apoſtle *Paul*, and many others, were no Monkiſh ſort of men; No men of Separation from the publique upon choice, but Perſonages, as of the moſt Divine ſpreading Reaſon, ſo of a publique Wiſdom, Grace, and Spirit, containing a publique Intereſt, and Piety within their own Breaſts; yet joyning with as many as they could, to better their ſervices mutually, and not ſcrupling union with them, leſt they ſhould be made worſe, or their ſervices leſs acceptable; Men of no narrow and contracted Spirits, Principles or Devotion, but like our Saviours converſe with *Publicans and Sinners*, they were as *Phyſicians to the ſick*, *Helps to the weak*, as well as the *Companions of all that fear God*, *pulling ſinners with violence out of the Fire*, *converting them from the error of their way*, *ſaving ſouls from Death, and endeavouring to hide the multitude of ſins*; and therefore were ſo prevalent in prayers for others, though at ſometimes God was ſo incens'd, as to deny Audience even to ſuch, except for their own ſouls.

Thus clear it is on the ſide of Publique Religion in theſe great Examples; they ſeparated from the ſins, the ſuperſtitions, that were at any time become publique, but joyn'd with the Publique Religion, and thereby rais'd it to much higher Excellency: It is impoſſible to make bad Things good, as Falſe Worſhip, or Corruptions of Practiſe, if never ſo many Good men fell into them; It would endanger them, but cannot better that, which is of it ſelf bad: But that which is in it ſelf Good, which would be much diſpirited through Evil handling it, by Bad men, may be made better by Holy mens Predominancy, and Aſcendency in it; and ſo turn to general Good, in *ſome Thirty*, in *ſome Sixty*, in *ſome an Hundredfold*; which ſhews the Nature of the both Communicativeneſs

and

and Singularity of theſe Holy men; Communicativeneſs in True Worſhip, though with Bad men; Singularity from Sin and Falſe Worſhip.

I have now diſpatched this firſt Head I propoſed concerning the publickneſs of Religion in general: I come now to the ſecond Head, *That this publickneſs determines it ſelf in National Religion, neither ſtaying ſhort of it, nor expatiating beyond it.*

And to make good this, I firſt conſider how humane Society riſes, and what are the firſt bands of Union. And it is very evident the firſt Aſſociations of mankind muſt grow out of Families, as I have obſerv'd the Law of Humane Society was firſt declar'd and promulg'd upon the Inſtitution of Marriage. This was the beginning of Families, Families of all greater aſſociations of men. Here alſo muſt begin all Religious Society. Theſe are the moſt near and combin'd; here therefore are the moſt frequent ſeaſons of worſhipping God, of daily praiſes of him, and prayers to him. The examples of it we find in *Abraham*'s, *Joſhua*'s, *David*'s, *Cornelius*'s Families, and the Churches in the Houſes of ſome Chriſtians at the firſt. This Domeſtick Body is moſt cloſe with it ſelf, and more eaſily call'd together, therefore the firſt ſeat of Religious Society.

Families therefore for the cloſeneſs, nearneſs, and naturalneſs of that Government, as being the ſmalleſt of Communities, but the moſt primitive, are particularly nam'd in this Prayer againſt the Heathen, and made another expreſſion together with Kingdoms of Irreligious Communities.

For as Kingdoms are greater Families, united indeed as Families but greater.

So Families though leſſer, were yet the firſt Kingdoms.

Religion therefore being a moſt unconteſtable duty and obligation in thoſe leſſer Kingdoms, Families, it argues to the ſame obligation and duty in thoſe greater Families, Kingdoms, and the Religion or Irreligion of the one and the other run along one with the other.

Thus God firſt eminently himſelf founded Religion in *Abraham*'s Family, and ſo commenc'd both the Family and Religion into a Nation and Kingdom. Religion therefore riſes higher, and ſettles here as upon the moſt advantageous Eminences, as in the moſt full and free ſpread Communities, call'd Nations for their greatneſs and numerouſneſs, Kingdoms for their Majeſtick government and union in it.

For

For a Nation or Kingdom is a part of Mankind canton'd indeed from the whole world, and the wideneſs of that, yet into a larger compaſs than Neighbourhoods, Towns or Cities, and is generally incloſed within ſome more remarkable bounds of place, as Seas, Rivers, Mountains; united by nearneſs of Manners, Cuſtoms, and Diſpoſition, ariſing from like Temperature of Air and Climate, freedom of Converſation and Commerce, having one and the ſame Language, but eſpecially as under the ſame Civil Intereſts, Laws, Government, and Legiſlative Authority.

For theſe mutual Bonds are they which give Reaſon to National Religion, as the moſt ſolemn inſtance of publick Religion and Worſhip of God, becauſe by vertue of theſe it becomes one great Family.

I know there may be ſome exceptions from this deſcription of a Nation, which will have their force upon National Religion alſo as it reſults from it. For ſometimes one Monarchy does as it were ſtride over more Nations, ſometimes one City or Free Town is diſtinguiſht from the reſt of the World by one Government, one Civil Intereſt, independent in its Government in its proper Intereſt upon any other.

Now in ſuch a Monarchy as contains ſeveral People and Nations under it, it does not properly give name to a National Religion, while their Intereſts, Laws, Converſation, and Civil Commerce are preſerved and kept diſtinct, as theſe are often allowed to be under ſome conquering Potentacy.

On the other ſide if a narrower compaſs of people than we properly call a Nation, *viz.* a Region, a Province, a City, hath its Intereſts, its Laws, its Government, Converſation and Commerce, intire to it ſelf; it is as to the purpoſe we are now upon, as it were a Nation.

The ſum then is this: ſo far as Humane Society has drawn any People or Families into a cloſe and more compacted ſtate of Civil Intereſts, neceſſitude one to another, and Government running up to the higheſt point of Government in that compact ſtate, ſo far is the obligation of Union in publick Religion drawn upon them; where theſe are freer, that attendance to union in Religion is freer alſo, any further than the common truth of Religion, and the obligations of that, bind even thoſe at greateſt diſtance and union one with another.

For thus Religion may and ought to unite all the true Profeſſors of it, at what remove ſoever from one another. It may and ought alſo

alſo to paſs upon whatever bond of union there is in the world; but there is no ſuch union as Laws, Commerce, Converſation, common ſafety running all up to the ſupreme Government over that conjunction to graft Religion upon. All elſe is but conſent in the ſame unity of one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptiſm, which make the Catholick Church one Body, and joining with one another, preſentially in the ſame acknowledgments of God, when a concurrence of all things neceſſary happens to fall out, as cannot be ſuppoſed frequent in parts remote one from another, and of a divers lip or language.

The Catholick Church is indeed united as Humane nature is, in one and the ſame true Reaſon, and thereupon a readineſs of wiſe and learned men to correſpond one with another at a diſtance, or conſer one with another if at any time ſuitable concurrences favour it, or as the world, much more the Catholick Church is a Temple built to the Glory of the Creator and Redeemer, wherein all good men meet from one end of the Heaven to the other, in the unity of the ſame Spirit, and in the ſame kind of worſhip; and if opportunity allowed, in the ſame actual worſhip.

The nearer therefore any parts of the Catholick Church are by the Neighbourhood of Nations, by the frequency of Traffick, the nearer the more frequent the correſpondencies are, the mutual aſſiſtance, may and ought to be.

But now in the Dependencies and Interweavings of all Civil Intereſts in Nations, there are not only thoſe voluntary and contingent correſpondencies, but ſuch as firſt grow out of the nature of Humane Society, and bind of themſelves to common true Religion; and then have the favour, encouragements, directions, obligations of Laws and Authority running like the ſame ſpirit into all the ſeveral parts of a Nation, and recommending that National true Religion as it ſtands in this Union that is firſt commanded by God, beſides much more free, ordinary, Actual Meetings in one and the very ſame place, and Acts of Worſhip. It is true indeed, the Worſhip of God allows our worldly callings, and the proviſions of the preſent life, and Relation, and therefore a Neighbourhood, whether it be the more populous of Cities, or Towns, or the more infrequent of Villages, hath the conveniencies of more ſolemn and ſtated Meetings, the ordinary fit ſeaſons of the *Lords-day*, and other ſolemn times of worſhip: thereupon National Religion is generally exercis'd in theſe leſſer Societies, even as the Juſtice and Execution of Laws,

Laws, and National Authority, muſt be brought home to men in their particular Countries, and Towns, and not reſt in the Capital Cities at a diſtance from their daily Buſineſs and Converſation; and yet the ſtandard of all things National is generally preſerv'd there for the very ſake of union. Even ſo of National Religion, not as Religion; for the ſtandard of that is Scripture only: but as National; ſo the Agreement in it is depoſited with all other National Acts. So that National Religion hath the advantage in theſe two things: Firſt, The Naturalneſs and Cloſeneſs of the Union of a Nation to all the Intereſts of Humane Society; and therein it imitates the nearneſs and cloſeneſs of Families, or leſſer Incorporations, as much as can be conſiſtent with the ſecond thing, *viz.* The Illuſtriouſneſs, Magnificence, Honourableneſs of Religion, as ſeated in larger Bodies, but eſpecially as upon the Soveraignties and Supremacies of the Great Incorporations of Mankind.

I ſhall only obſerve further, That All this does moſt effectually exclude the pretence of an *Univerſal Church-Monarchy*, as hateful in Religion, as an Univerſal State-Monarchy in Politicks, and Civil Liberty. Both of which are indeed Tyranny.

The Imaginary Benefits of ſuch ſorts of Union are infinitely toilſome, and tedious, while they are expected, and always in the iſſue found impoſſible to be enjoyed in their Fruits; but in the mean time, while the pretenders are labouring for, and graſping at ſo vaſt a power, they fill the world with the lamentable effects of their Ambition, and do indeed deſtroy Humane Society, becauſe thoſe Laws and Bands that tye it together, being ſo over-ſtrain'd, fly in pieces; and I am ſure nothing is more contrary to *Chriſtianity*, than an *Univerſal Head of Religion* here upon Earth, except Chriſt himſelf with an Ubiquity of Holineſs, Power and Influence, came down to reign upon it. An univerſal Union were indeed deſirable, and glorious, if there were an Omnipreſence of Vertues anſwerable to the Adminiſtration; but that being too great for any creature; too great in the preſent ſtate of the World; Religion, and Chriſtian Religion glide along with the Civil Union they find prepared, as I ſhall preſently evince, beyond which is nothing but Uſurpation.

I come now to the Arguments from Scripture and Reaſon for National Religion, not afforded to any other Figure of Union in it.

The

The first Argument shall be, that I derive from this prayer, I have chosen to discourse this point upon: and I lay it thus. The prayers, in which *Holy men spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, rest upon some great Pillars and Principles of Divine Truth, and Argument: For particular cases, in which they prayed, are brought to those general principles, by an understanding inlightned to understand, in an humble sense, even as God understands, and inflam'd with a Holy Affection, in a lowly Imitation of the *Divine Zeal*, wherewith God performs all his *Holy Ordinations*. Thus as *Princes they have power with God*, because they offer him their Petitions according to his Established Rules of Government, and his own *Holy Will*, concerning the things, wherein they pray to him. *Argum.* 2.

Now the understanding these Rules was extraordiuary, and infallible to the *Prophets*, and Servants of God inspir'd by him, but to us in ordinary by the light of the Word of God, by the Laws of True and Right Reason in deductions from that word: And in which word, and the deductions from it, if we are not mistaken, the Efficacy will be certain, because if we *ask according to his will, we are sure he heareth us, and that we have in some true sense the Petitions we ask of him*. This is so valuable a Rule of prayer, that *Daniel*, though so great a *Man of Vision*, yet betook himself to this ordinary means of Instruction in the mind of God, *Dan.* 9. By Books of Holy Records, and general Chronology, he knew that the time of the *Babylonish Captivity* was near its Expiration, and so *set himself to prayer*, and was crown'd with this wonderful success and acceptance.

Thus prayers prevail with God, and yet without any change in him, there being a Configuration, or Concurrence of all things, according to his own unchangable Will; His *Counsels of old*, that are Faithfulness and Truth, are remonstrated to him by the humble, fervent desires of his servants, that knew them to be his Counsels, and who are ordered by the same counsels to enquire, or beseech him by prayer according to them, and therefore by his *spirit, the spirit of prayer*, He draws the parallel lines to his own Intentions upon their Hearts, Desires, and Affections.

I have pursued this the further, because it gives a solution to that Doubt, how God without any change in himself hears prayers; and also assures us, this prayer being so remarkable, as to be twice us'd in the same words, most certainly bears it self upon

ſome certain principle, from which we may argue to general practiſe. The principle it reſts upon, muſt be this: There is an Eſtabliſh'd order betwixt *the wrath* and *diſpleaſure* of God; *His Fury*, and *Vengeance*, and *the Nations*, or *Families*, *not knowing*, *not calling on his Name*: and this is known by very light of Nature. *His Wrath*, according to unchangable Laws, is always *prepar'd* againſt thoſe that forſake him, and that Duty they owe to him, as Nations: It had been elſe a great preſumption upon God, and Breach of Charity to the Nations ſo to pray againſt them; which may alſo give us account of all thoſe Dreadful Imprecations, and Curſes, *David*, and other *Prophets* and Holy men pour out againſt their own Enemies, and the Enemies of their people; They are founded in their being Enemies to God, his True Worſhip, Love, and Service, and as ſuch their Final Deſtruction was decreed againſt them by the moſt Righteous Laws of Divine Government, made known unto thoſe Holy men, and ſo they prayed for it as publique perſons, and not out of private Wrath and Revenge: but this by the way. I proceed now in the main Argument.

And this principle I am upon, That the Wrath of God is againſt the *Nations* that are without *National Religion*, lyes deeper in a Firſt, and more Original principle, *viz.* There is an Obligation, a great Duty lying upon *Nations*, as *Nations to know, and worſhip the True God*; for elſe *why ſhould God find fault? why ſhould he be angry, when none had reſiſted his Will?*

From hence it is, That there is a Natural Order eſtabliſhed by God, between his Love, and Favour, and a People, and their publique True Religion, becauſe it is the Obſervation of a Duty, and the Obſervation of Duty is the fitting us for Bleſſing, and Favour, as the neglect, and Tranſgreſſion of Duty cannot be without wrath and diſpleaſure. For thus God hath placed *Life* and *Death* one over againſt another; yet ſo that *Life* and *Bleſſing* are always firſt, even as Duty is always before ſin: For God *never made Death and Deſtruction*, even as he never could be the cauſe of ſin, but they come in by the Failing of our Duty, and ſo of that Life and Bleſſedneſs entail'd on our Duty.

Yet the Obligation to National True Religion is much more evident from theſe Holy men, praying down Wrath upon them that *know not God*, and that *call not on his Name*; then it could have been from the praying for his Favour to them, that *did know him*, and that did *call on his Name*; becauſe his Favour might have

have been vouchſafed upon Terms much below our ſubſtantial and inviolable Duty: As many of the *Jewiſh Rites* might be Arguments for, and Pledges of Gods gracious Regard to the people, he had ſo diſtinguiſh'd, when the want of thoſe ſigns would not have argued to the effuſion of his Wrath and Vengeance, there being no natural, or poſitive Duty lying upon any, but the *Jews* to ſuch obſervances: There may be many Arguments for the Bounty and Favour of God from External Rites appointed by him, and obſerv'd by his people; though indeed theſe all refer to their Eſſential Duty, and argue nothing without it: Yet the contrary will not enforce to the oppoſite Degrees of Wrath and Indignation, becauſe they are not obſerv'd, when no ſubſtantial Duty is violated. *Uncircumciſion, that keeps the Law*, may have in the main the ſame ſecurity from wrath, with *Circumciſion that keeps the Law alſo.* Seeing then there is ſo great wrath againſt thoſe *that know not God, that call not on his Name*; It aſſures us, the Duty, the Obligation, and the Reaſon of it lye deep, that the omiſſion is ſo ſubjected to the Divine Revenges: and it is in this; A ſociety without Religion is a High contempt of God, *a making fleſh our arm*, and departing from the Lord, and ſo from his Favour and Bleſſing. A principality without an Inſcription, a Dedication to the Glory of God, to which all things are to be devoted, is like the building *a Tower up to Heaven.* A ſin like the ſin of *Herod*, when he let that Sacrilegious Applauſe ſink into him, and gave not *the Glory to God*, and therefore ſubjects men to be at any time ſmitten and blaſted by God; who has ſaid, *Thoſe that honour him, he will honour; but all elſe ſhall be lightly eſteem'd*, whether *Nation* or *Perſon.* It is not therefore only the Judgment upon the Irreligion of particular perſons, of particular Families, that is here intended, though this is included and ſuppos'd, but eſpecially upon the Irreligion of Societies, knitting and ſtrengthning themſelves without the True God; upon Principalities exalting themſelves, and not by and with the *Almighty*, and *Supreme Majeſty.*

On the other ſide, if there be a Duty, an Obligation of being publiquely Religious, there is a Bleſſing upon it, according to that Fundamental Principle; *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him: that Godlineſs hath the promiſes of this life, and of that which is to come:* And this muſt be firſt, becauſe as Righteouſneſs and Duty are before ſin, ſo Bleſſing and Favour are before Wrath and Diſpleaſure:

ſure: Yet Wrath is a more certain Demonſtration of abſolute Duty violated, than Favour is of abſolute Duty obſerv'd, becauſe the Favour of God is more at liberty than his Wrath, which always depends on ſtrict Juſtice. All which amounts to the full proof of the great Duty of *National Religion* from this prayer, ſeeing National Irreligion is *ſo near the Curſe of Divine Fury and Revenge.*

Argum. 2. Having thus far conſidered National Religion, as it is founded in the very Laws of Nature, and inviolable duty to God. I come ſecondly, to conſider the Wiſdom, and unqueſtionable Rationality of the Divine Ordination *among the Jews*; when by a Prerogative of Power, and Goodneſs, God would ſecure the True Religion, after *the Nations* had ſo corrupted themſelves, and that he had now begun, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *to ſuffer them to walk after their own ways:* He founds his Worſhip, as it were anew, firſt in *Abrahams* Family, and from thence commences it into a National State, even as he did the Family, wherein he had plac'd it, and that for the very ſake of his True Worſhip, which *Family* and *Nation* had indeed many peculiars in its Religious Conſtitution, ſuch as are not to be found in any other, as I ſhall after account for them; yet in the general, it is an Evidence of the Fitneſs and Agreeableneſs of that Model of Humane Society, to the Ends of Religion, and the Acceptableneſs to God, it ſhould be ſo devoted.

But becauſe we may think this chuſing of *Abrahams Family*, and the *Nation* riſing from it, was an Interdict upon any other *Family*, or *Nation*, to inſtitute a publique National Religion, any other ways, than as they *Proſelyted* themſelves to that one Nation and Family: It is very obſervable, there are elſewhere the footſteps of *National*, and *Family Religion*, though more rare in that very time, as in *Melchiſedeck*, who was *King of Salem, of Peace and Righteouſneſs*, and *Prieſt of the moſt High God*, ſo incorporating Religion with his Government, the ſame is to be found in *Job*, and his Friends: ſo that the Erecting a *National Religion* among the *Jews*, did not ſuperſede the obligation of any of the *Nations* to the *National Worſhip* of God, though in Judgment paſt our finding out, He *ſo overlook'd them, as to leave them to themſelves, for he never left himſelf without witneſs* He ought to be ſo worſhipped, by *giving them fruitful times and ſeaſons, and filling their hearts with food and gladneſs: He was never far from them, in*

that

that he gave them life, and breath, and all things; and in him they lived, moved, and had their Beings; ſo that they were without excuſe, when at any time *his wrath was reveal'd from Heaven againſt them, for not glorifying him as God, and being thankful.* *Belſhazzar*, and his *Nation*, were obnoxious to God, for not *Glorifying that God*, in whoſe hands was his life, and breath, and all his ways. Beſides thoſe of the *Nations* that were near the *Jews* were allowed to unite themſelves to the *Jewiſh* National Religion, when the Laws of Nature were grown ſo dark and obſolete among themſelves; and though they were the ſons of ſtrangers, yet God aſſur'd them a *place in his ſanctuary*; but becauſe there was not proviſion enough for the multitude of the Nations within the Bounds of that Religion; it was certainly at all times lawful and pleaſing to God, that they ſhould have Nationally dedicated themſelves to the *true Jehovah*, though eminently known then to be the *God of Iſrael*: and that they did not ſo, gave reaſon always to his Wrath againſt them, whenever he pleaſed to execute it.

But I haſten to the third Argument of nearer concernment to us.

The third Argument I derive from the Favour of *Chriſtian Religion*, to National Religion; of which I ſhall lay down ſeveral proofs. *Argum.* 3.

1. Chriſtianity repeals none of the Laws of God that are founded in the very Nature of Things: if therefore National Religion be according to the Rules of Eſſential Duty towards God, if it be the *Reaſonable ſervice* of Nation; It is certain Chriſtianity does not remove it, but reſtores and exalts it to the greateſt perfection: *Chriſt came not to diſſolve any of thoſe Laws*, but to fulfil them, that is, to reſtore the Doctrine to its juſt Integrity, where it was falſly gloſs'd upon; and if any thing was wanting in the former Revelation of it, to ſuperadd what might render it moſt complete.

2. Of the ſame Nature is the ſecond proof, That if God not only for the ſake of type, and ſhadow, which was uſeful for that State of the Church, but for the ſake of the real Goodneſs and Uſefulneſs of the Thing it ſelf, pitch'd upon the National Form of Religion, by his immediate Revelation to *Abraham* and *Moſes*, (as I have already argued), it cannot be ſuppos'd to be revers'd by Chriſt: It remains therefore among thoſe things *that are written for our Admonition, and Learning, on whom the Ends of the world are come.*

3. Chri-

3. Chriſtianity vouches it ſelf a Religion of the moſt publique ſpirit and intention, and came into the world by the High Conduct of God to open all paſſages for Truth and Divine Knowledge among men; as innumerable places in the Old and New Teſtament aſſure us; ſo that the Goſpel moſt evidently deſigns it ſelf to be free, and publique, as the Heaven, as the lights of it, and the words of the *Pſalmiſt* may well be apply'd to it: *The line of it is gone throughout all the Earth, and its words to the ends of the world:* ſo far therefore as Naturalneſs, and Publiqueneſs agree, ſo far the thing is undeniable.

4. Many expreſſions of the *Prophets* that went before, of *our Saviour*, and his *Apoſtles* that followed after, have a particular Favour for National Religion. To name ſome of a multitude: *Chriſt ſhall ſprinkle many Nations: He is the Deſire of all Nations: Go make Diſciples of all Nations: All the Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt.* The Apoſtle *magnifies himſelf*, as the *Apoſtle of the Nations*; He compares himſelf *with the Holy Prieſthood*, while by *Preaching the Goſpel*, he was negotiating in the *offering up the Nations, a ſacrifice conſecrated*, and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, the greateſt ſacrifice that was ever offer'd to God, except that of the *Son of God, offering himſelf*. And this is the only inſtance of *the Miniſtry of the New Teſtament*, reſembled with the *Prieſthood* of the *Law*, or cloath'd with that Denomination of Prieſtlineſs, uſe hath appropriated to it and that to no other office but of Preaching to Converſion, *Rom.* 15 16.

But becauſe I know the proofs from theſe Scriptures are lyable to be retrench'd by expounding them of the Diffuſion of Chriſtianity into the Catholick Church throughout the World, and then calling out of every Nation Converts into particular Societies and Congregations; I ſhall make an Eſſay to level the line of them to Nations and Kingdoms, as they are united into ſuch Conſpicuous, and Illuſtrious Bodies of Mankind, with their Principalities ſo form'd, ſo compacted, and not only a Diffus'd Catholick Church, or ſmall and inviſible Congregational Churches.

1. The Kingdom of Chriſt can no way attain that Greatneſs, which it is propheſyed and foretold it ſhall attain, if it does not allow Nations, as Nations to aſſociate themſelves in the profeſſion of it; if it only gives Right to private and particular Churches, or Congregations; and a Diffuſive Church, that can no way congregate, which though great in its Spiritual Union, yet ariſes to no viſible

viſible Greatneſs, but as it moving into all parts of the world, congregates it ſelf according to any of the Laws, or Advantages of Humane Society it falls into, and finds prepared for it: The *Meſſiah* then can never, as is prophecyed of him, *have his portion divided him with the great, nor divide the ſpoyl with the ſtrong*, but muſt reſt in a very low and under-condition of ſmall, private, and particular Aſſemblies of his ſervants, profeſſing him; but a *National Chriſtian Religion*, a Religion, as Famous as the name of the moſt populous Cities, and the greateſt Princes and their Territories, in honour to the *Lords anointed*, muſt not be allowed, no not according to his own Deſignation. For though the Eminency of the Doctrine, and the Appearance of God with it, does infinitely ſurmount all created Greatneſs; yet many places of Scripture compare the Honour and Glory of Chriſt, as a Prince over Nations, with other Soveraignties, and preſer his; not only in regard of the Heavenlineſs, and Eternity of it, but as it obtains an Intereſt and Command in the world. For it is a Government over Nations, as Nations; over the Laws and Principalities of Nations; and not of one only, but many Nations; not indeed in the way of Worldly power, but Divine perſwaſion: Evidences of Truth, and Reaſon, Vertue of Holineſs, and Goodneſs, are *the Scepter of this Kingdom, the weapons of this Power*; and this Mountain ſhall grow greater, and greater, till all the Prophecies are exactly fulfill'd in the Soveraignty of Chriſt, and the loweſt ſubjection of all Kingdoms to him: the greateſt *Mountains* diſappearing and becoming nothing before him, when *the fulneſs of the Jews*, and *Nations* are come into him. Thus it is *a Mountain ſet upon the top of the Mountains*; not only in the Eminency of its Doctrine, but the profeſſed ſubjection of the Governments of the world (that are in Scripture call'd *Mountains*) to it, for his Truth, Meekneſs, and Righteouſneſs ſake: But if Nations receiving and flowing into Chriſtianity, ſink it preſently into particular, private Aſſemblies, as it was while under perſecution, and that it ſhould be of no more publique Honour, than at ſuch times; the *Mountain of the Lords houſe* ſhould not be above the Hills, but ſhaded by them, and that according to the very Conſtitution of Chriſtianity it ſelf; for the Supremacies ſtand aloft, but the profeſſion of Chriſt retires into privacies; yea the worſhip of the True God, *Creator of Heaven and Earth*, which after the appearance of the Son of God in the world, is only in Chriſt, muſt be ſo far from being *exalted*, as

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is everywhere ſignified, that it muſt be abated and brought low by the Depreſſion and falling down of *the Moſaick Frame*; for then it was ſetled upon one of the Principalities of the world; and though it be now more diffus'd, yet if it not only be not, but ought upon its own principles to be Eſtabliſhed in, and upon the publick profeſſion of a Nation; It has not, nor can have ſuch an Eminency as among the *Jews*, when it had the Awfulneſs and Majeſtickneſs of a Kingdom devoted to that true Worſhip, making it thereby of much greater notice in the World.

And if Religion may be National, even as Nations themſelves are united in a way of order, ſo muſt National Religion alſo be by order compos'd into its Nationalneſs: and this by the Rules of Scripture and Right Reaſon.

But let this be no pretence to that Tyranny in Chriſtian Religion, that great Uſurpation of Popery; for it is a Sacrilegious Diſplacing the Honour from Chriſt upon oftentimes a moſt unworthy Mortal; thoſe Princes then that are *Minores Coronæ*, that leſſen themſelves by giving their *Kingdom* and *power to the Beaſt*, muſt needs diminiſh the Honour of their profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſeeing they have ſo far ſtripp'd themſelves of their Principalities, that they have them not to dedicate to Chriſt: The retaining their Honour unvouch'd, unviolate by any creature, and preſenting to the Honour of Chriſtianity a Supremacy unproſtitute, is the true Glory done by Chriſtian Princes to Chriſtianity.

2. If there were not the Liberty allowed to Nations to eſpouſe Chriſtianity to their Government, and to receive the Honour to themſelves of being Religious, and Chriſtian, as Nations; the Condition of Nations were worſe than that of the *Jews* under *the Law*. For now People, as in the Body of a Nation, may not be ſo happy, as *to have the Lord for their God*. They may not crown themſelves with the chief Glory of Nations, *viz.* True Religion: *Moſes*, we know, often magnifies *the State of the Jews* to themſelves, in this particular, *viz.* the *Excellency of their Religion*: He uſes it as a great Argument, that God *loved the Nation*; He told them, it was their *Wiſdom* and *Honour*, before *the reſt of the Nations round about them*, who had reaſon to defer to them, that they were *a great*, and *a wiſe Nation*, *an underſtanding people*, that had *ſuch Statutes* and *Judgments*.

Deut. 4. 8, &c.

Now ſeeing Chriſtian Religion hath the undoubted Evidences of Wiſdom, Truth, and Goodneſs; not only ſo ſuperior to all the Religions

Religions in the world, as to be *the only true Religion*; but much ſuperior to that under Adminiſtration of the *True Religion* it ſelf among the *Jews*: It muſt needs be the happineſs of Nations to enfranchiſe it, as the publick National Religion, by the ſame Authority whereby they make valid any other Law, or Act, ſo as to become the Act of the Publick.

And we have reaſon to believe thoſe many expreſſions of *Epheſ.* 2. 14. c 3. 6. *Breaking down the Partition Wall*, and admitting all Nations to be *the People of God*, and σύσσωμα, a Body together, are intended, not only to ſignifie that they may unite in leſſer Congregations, but in the fulneſs of National Aſſociations, elſe they are not received into the ſame freedoms and immunities that the *Jews* had; nor could *Ægypt* and *Aſſyria* be ſo equal with *Iſrael*, that *Iſrael* ſhould be but a third with them, whom the *Lord of Hoſts* ſhall bleſs all alike with no more variation, than *Ægypt my People*, *Aſſyria the work of my Hands*, and *Iſrael my Inheritance*, *Iſa.* 19. We may find *Chriſtianity* intended to embrace all Societies of Mankind, it declared it ſelf a Religion that loved them, and, as it were, on purpoſe to teſtifie the Divine Approbation of, and the near reſemblance between thoſe Civil and Political Unions one with another, founded in the very nature of Humane Society; and that Religious Union, which by the very ſame Law of Nature follows them as ſo united, Chriſtianity kept to the very ſame Tenor of Union it found any where, and twin'd as cloſe about the Cities, Neighbourhoods and Families, made ready to its hand by civil Aſſociations, as it could; not calling men out to Wilderneſſes, Mountains, or Woods, to be the *Churches of Chriſt*; or that they ſhould abide in Deſarts and Solitudes, when perſecution did not drive and force them out: But the Churches of Chriſt are denominated from thoſe Cities and Regions where they are planted, as the *Churches of Epheſus, Corinth, Judæa, Galatia, Macedonia, &c.* yea the *Chriſtians of Achaia*, are called by the Apoſtle, *Achaia*, as if Chriſtianity were there become the Religion of the Countrey; and the *ſeven Churches of Aſia*, are called thoſe very Cities where they were ſeated. Wherein it is obſervable, the *Churches* of Cities are called the Church of or in each City, as one; though it is in a manner certain, they muſt be diſtributed into more Congregations for their numerouſneſs; yet they are ſtill called one, becauſe the City was one. But the Regions not being ſo united in Government, Neighbourhood, or any kind of Civil Union, the diſtribution of *Churches* eaſily fol-

Eph. 2. 14. c. 3. 6.

2 Cor. 9. 2.

Rev. 1. 11.

lows the distinction easily supposable in their civil state: In Regions therefore we suppose there was no Centre of Union, not in the *Churches*, which were at distances too great for Coagmentation into one; nor in the Laws and Government, at least with any respect of order towards Religion; they are therefore called Churches and not one Church, as they are without any exception in Cities, even where the Apostle names particular Churches in the Houses within those Cities; yet in regard of the Unity of the City it self, they are comprehended under the one Church of that City.

Now all this speaks the care *Christian Religion* uses not to disturb, but to conform to Civil Societies, and therefore especially to National the chief of those Societies; and so I close this third Argument for National Religion, derived from the consideration of Christian Religion.

Argum. 4. National Religion is of great moment and consideration, in respect to the *Day of Judgment*; for the wrath and fury of God upon those Nations that know him not, that call not on his Name, is to be taken at the full extent and duration in this world, in *that which is to come*; and so the happiness of Nations, who *have the Lord for their God*, that have the *everlasting Arms* under and about them, spreads it self not only upon Time, but upon Eternity.

It is indeed generally taken for granted, that Nations are only judged as Nations in this world; yet if we closely examine, we shall find both in Scripture and Reason, very valuable grounds to believe, the *Day of Judgment* shall not only pass upon persons single, but in their Communities, as they are lock'd in with their Associations, and with respect to those very periods of Time, and the Generations into which the Communities and Associations have been distributed; so that not only the people of every Nation come into Judgment together, but the people of every Generation, of this or that Nation, come distinctly into Judgment together.

Besides those peculiarities of Sin, or Grace, wherein every man is individual to himself, and no *Stranger intermeddles*, but he *proves* and *enjoys* his own work alone, or bears his own burden: There are also mens interwoven Actions, either good or bad, wherein the Communities, knots of Society, Neighbourhoods, Concurrences with the Nation, Conformities with the Age and Generation, shall be exactly compared, and weighed in the *Eternal Judgment*.

For there is nothing more frequent in the Scripture, than thus to represent

repreſent the carriage of the *day of Judgment*: The *Nations*, whole as Nations, *that forget God, ſhall be turned into Hell*, and *Ægypt and all its company, all its Hoſts lye together*; the other Nations with their multitude, every one in their proper ſorts: *The Uncircumciſion and thoſe without Law, are judged by themſelves*; the *Circumciſion, and thoſe under the Law, by themſelves, diſtinctly* Our Saviour ſpeaks of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah, the men of Nineveh, Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum, coming into Judgment*, in that Union, in that Community, wherein they were imbodyed here in the world; and the men of that *Generation*, as they were that *Generation*. Ezek 32. 18, &c. Rom 2 12.

I confeſs it is not ſo clear, that the happineſs and ſalvation of mankind, is with any reſpect to the diſtinction of Nations; becauſe, beſides what other reaſons may be given, the union of all bleſſed perſons to God and Chriſt, and of happy Spirits one to another, is ſo infinitely great, as to ſwallow up all diſtinctions; ſo that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Scythian nor Barbarian, but God and Chriſt are all, and in all.

And ſo far as there is any ſuch National diſtinction, *Our Lord* being of the *Seed* of *Abraham*, in whom all *the Families of the Earth are bleſſed, the boſom of Abraham, the Table of Everlaſting Life*, at which *Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob ſit down, the new Jeruſalem, the Iſrael of God*, are the Capital expreſſions of happineſs.

But ſtill there is reaſon to think the diſtinction of Nations is not ſo loſt, but that the *Holy Seed* is as the *ſubſtance of every Nation*, in which it is for ever (as it were by it ſelf conſerv'd:) *A Seed ſerves God* in every Age, which is accounted to the Lord for a Generation at that time, and when *God writes down the people in the Book of Life*, he writes them as under the head of ſuch a Nation; *this or that man was born there*, although they are all enrolled, *as Citizens of that common City of Zion, the City of David, from whom our Lord ſprang*. And though all Chriſtians are one *holy Nation*, yet it is ſaid of ſome very glorious, and *happy State of the Church* (of which I will not undertake to determine) that after the *diſtinct Sealing of ſo many thouſands of each Tribe*, there was yet *an innumerable company*, not in a confuſion, but in a diſtinction; ſo as to be known *to be of all Nations*, Kindreds, People, and Tongues. All the Nations of *them that are ſaved*, are alſo mentioned in the ſame Myſtical Book, as kept under that diſtinction.

The *Apoſtle* ſpeaks to his *Corinthians* and *Theſſalonians*, as certain

he ſhould meet them under thoſe very names, at the appearance of *Chriſt*: He prays for *Iſrael*, as a Nation, that *they might be ſaved*; he diſcourſes their *falling away* and *recovery* in a national way, for many particular Iſraelites were then called and ſaved, but not in a national way, as he inſiſts.

Beſides all theſe fair Inducements from Scripture, there is the ſame urgency of Reaſon, for the *Day of Judgment* paſſing upon men, as in Nations and leſſer Communities, as upon their ſingle perſons; for elſe their actions can never be judged, the very complyance with the cuſtom of Nations, with the ſway of ſuch an Age and time, being the reaſon of many ſins; and the ſinful ways of men are ſo locked into one another, that the *Day of Judgment*, that gives ſentence upon all things moſt righteouſly, comprehends them together, even as the *Fallen Angels*, *the old World* were judged together, and in common.

Jude 7th. In *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, was given a pre-appeatance of the *final Judgment* upon the world, for the *Apoſtle* tells us they were *ſet forth for an enſample*, and *that they ſuffered the Vengeance of Eternal Fire*; and we know they ſuffered in their Community; *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, with all their company, were involved, as in the ſin, ſo in the puniſhment; and there is no ſeparation except where Repentance, and that with great difficulty, hath made it.

So on the happy ſide of things, Religious Nations and Communities encourage and aſſiſt one another in acts of Love, Service and Duty to God, in Virtue and all Goodneſs, and infold their piety mutually, ſo that on neither ſide the recompences of Mercy or Juſtice can be proportioned, but as in Community.

2. There is the ſame Reaſon for *the laſt Judgment* paſſing upon Nations as Nations, as for its paſſing upon private perſons, as private perſons.

For let any one ſurvey Hiſtory, and he ſhall find Nations, as Nations, have eſcaped the vengeance of God in this world, as much as ſingle Perſons; and the ſame ſort of Revolutions, Changes, and final Periods have befallen Nations profeſſing God and Chriſt, as thoſe that have been enemies to ſuch Profeſſion; as is moſt apparent in a compare of the Jews or Chriſtian Nations: Yea generally thoſe that have been *called by the Name of God and Chriſt*, have been moſt ſpeedily puniſhed, as thoſe that *God hath moſt eſpecially known of all the Nations of the Earth*. The Prophet *Habakuk*'s Firſt Chapter is ſpent upon this very Subject, of that wicked Nation of the *Chaldeans*, ſo

proſperous

proſperous above *the Jews*, deſcribed in many elegant ſimilitudes, and vehemently expoſtulated from the twelfth verſe to the end.

Whoever ſhall conſider the ancient *Romans*, or the *Papacy*, or the *Turkiſh Empire*, ſince the riſing of it, muſt needs conclude, that to judge Nations, as Nations, at laſt, appertains as much to the Paramount Soveraignty of Divine Juſtice, and more than ſingle Perſons.

Nations that have been ſo great and formidable, and Princes ſwelling with the height of Pride, and contempt of God and Religion, ſhould in all reaſon ſtand in thoſe very Appearances at his Tribunal; with their wiſe Senates, mighty Captains, Armies, and Multitude about them, and ſo be Sentenced and Condemned by the *Righteous Judge of all the World, the only Potentate, the King of Kings, Lord of Lords*, and *Prince of Princes, even Chriſt the Son of God, in humane Natue*, elſe they would not be judged at all as Nations.

For here neither *Love* nor *Hatred* can be known any more to Nations than to ſingle Perſons, by *any thing that is before us. There is often one event to all, to the Righteous and Merciful*, and to the *Unjuſt* and Tyrannick Nations, to the *Good* and to the *unclean People*, to them that *ſacrifice to the True God*, and to them that *ſacrifice to Idols*.

There are as many Inſtances of the ſeverity of God againſt private, particular wicked perſons, as againſt ſuch Princes, Nations, or particular Ages; and of his patience and forbearance to the one as to the other: There are as great examples of the mercy, and favour of God to private, particular good men, as to pious Nations and Governments; and of his ſevere corrections upon the one as the other. The piety therefore and the wickedneſs of Nations according to their particular Generations, equally waits for the *laſt Day*, even as of ſingle Perſons.

For though there are Periods Judgment ſets to it ſelf; and when ſin is come to its height, *Judgment ſtays no longer*; yet this without a *future Judgment* will not give ſatisfaction for the Ages of Proſperity and Greatneſs, the many ſignal Victories, the ſtupendious Grandeur many very bad Nations and their Princes have arrived at, and continued in before the *final Calamity* hath *overtaken them*; any more than dying at laſt with great circumſtances of pain and horror, anſwers for the worldly proſperity of many a wicked man, if after *Death* there were no *Judgment*: So that eſpecially as to particular Generations, there is the ſame Reaſon for the Judgment of Nations, as of particular Perſons.

3. It

3. If all things were not to be as publickly tranſacted at the *Day of Judgment*, and to be ſet upon as open and univerſal a Theatre, as they were acted upon here, and that before the Congregation of Heaven and Earth at that day; there were not ſo great reaſon for an *Univerſal Judgment*; The *Private Judgment* of Souls might ſuffice: Nor could there be any reaſon the Scripture ſhould lay ſo great weight upon the *Reſurrection*, and that in the very ſame Bodies, at leaſt as to the principal parts, and ſo as that men ſhould be known to be the ſame perſons?

Why thus, If men were not to be preſented in the ſame Circumſtances, Relations, Communities, and the moſt notorious Appearances, wherein they converſed, and whereby they were moſt known in the world?

Let this then be granted, and it will riſe up to States, Governors, Senates, Princes, their Laws and Tranſactions, with the temper of their Times.

And indeed this ſetting Perſons, their places of Habitation, their Nation, their Times, together; muſt needs break out with the greateſt luſtre of Juſtice, and the Supremacy of Divine Judgment, when every thing ſhall be called to account, and repreſented over again, juſt as it was in this world: Things high and low, publick, and private, national, and perſonal; but without this all would be dark, private, obſcure, and imperfect; notwithſtanding the gathering all together to that Tribunal. For very momentous Cauſes, Circumſtances, Aggravations, or Extenuations of Good or Evil, could not be underſtood: The Pride of Sin and Wickedneſs would not be ſufficiently humbled and abaſed, nor deſpiſed goodneſs enough raiſed and honoured, and ſo would amount to little more than a *private Judgment* as I ſaid before; but Scripture every where inſtructs us, it is the very deſign of the *Day of Judgment, to ſhew* and *preſent* the whole Scene of things, and to ſet the ballance of them even in all particulars: It is the *Day*, not only of *the righteous Judgment of God*, but of the *manifeſtation of it*; every thing is then compoſed to ſhew and *Manifeſtation*; it is the *appearance of Chriſt*, whom *God* will then *ſhow* in the higheſt glory of the humane Nature, and ſo that his low, deſpiſed, humbled, and crucifyed State, ſhall alſo be ſeen, and the glory triumph over it, to the utter confuſion and wailing of all that *pierced* him, whoſe very *own eyes* ſhall ſee him, as ſo pierced by them. It is *the appearance* of men in their Bodies, of Nations in their National Capacities, of all men and things

things in their *Reſtitution*: For it is the παλιγγενεσία, the *Regeneration*, (*Mat.* 19. 28.) to their former ſtate; that Religion and Piety may receive its recompences of Glory, that Irreligion and Wickedneſs may have its juſt rewards of Shame and Punishment, and that in the very circumſtances wherein each were ſeen and known, and ſhall then be remembred to have ſtood here in the world, though for the generality, very different from the eſteem and diſeſteem they then found.

Laſtly, This Repreſentation of the *day of Judgment*, is the moſt lively, feeling, and ſenſible Engagement to ſpeedy *Repentance* and *Reformation*, that *our ſins may be blotted out*, when the times ἀναψύξεως, of Re-enlivening all things ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord: Who would not take greateſt care, *that when they are ſought for, they may not be found?* Who would not deſire, and ſo uſe the moſt effectual means to *appear in Glory*, and not *under ſhame and contempt?* Acts 3 19.

This is alſo among the ſtrongeſt Arguments upon the moſt honourable Perſonages and Governors of a Nation, yea upon all that love the honour of their Nation, and deſire the glory of it with the *true publick Spirit*, to mind the promotion of ſincere Religion, Piety, and Goodneſs in themſelves, together with the State of the People, Times, and Governments to which they belong; ſince if they deſire their Nations Renown in this world, and that their management in it may be tranſmitted fair in Chronicle, that they may live High in Story; how much more muſt they, if at all ſerious deſire to make an Honourable Figure in that moſt Illuſtrious Repreſentation of the laſt Judgment, and the Eternal Records of All Things? They and their Countrey together, according to the ſtation and Relation wherein they have ſtood to it, and the love they have born to it?

And certainly every good man deſires by an immutable Inſtinct, by a Law of Goodneſs within himſelf, to be good in a Community, and to be ſaved in their Salvation, which he earneſtly aſpires to in and with his own, and his own in and with that: Yea, though he be ſo low or mean in his Fortunes, Abilities, or Diſcourſe, as not to be in any Advantages for propagating True Religion, yet he hath an inward force to it; and as every good man riſes in his Stature and Condition, and influence in the Nation to which he belongs; ſo in his ſervice to the publick Religion, but eſpecially every eminent, great, truly Religious Perſon, of a publick Character and a Lover

of his Nation, hath a moſt vehement and ardent deſire, not only of his own Salvation, but of the Salvation of his Nation, of as many and great numbers, of as univerſal a Body of it as may be. *Moſes* was ſo high in this, that he deſired to be *blotted out of Gods Book* of Favour, that he, rather than his Nation ſhould; and the Apoſtle *Paul for Iſrael, his National Kindred, wiſhed to be Anathema from Christ*: The ſcruples of either of which I will not diſpute, being ſatisfied they expreſs a high and mighty zeal for the National Salvation, and which in a degree is to be imitated by the beſt men.

Exod. 32. 31.

Rom. 9 3.

Therefore ſuch Perſons, as *Moſes*, *Paul*, and other of the Worthies of Nations and People, that have been ſucceſsful in bringing many to Righteouſneſs and Happineſs, ſhall have (as our Saviour ſpeaks) *Rule over Cities* proportionable to their ſervice; they ſhall for ever be exalted as Princes over their People in Eternal Glory, even as the *Apoſtles ſhall ſit upon Thrones, judging*, (that is) ſhall be Rulers and Governors over *the twelve Tribes of Iſrael*.

Thoſe that have not been ſucceſsful, as *Noah*, *Lot*, *Eſay*, *&c.* that have yet had the Zeal, the publick Spirit, that was commenſurable to the Piety, Religion, and Salvation of their whole Community, ſhall not, though *Iſrael be not gathered*, yet *ſpend their ſtrength for nought*, their judgment *is with the Lord, and their work with their God. They ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, they ſhall be a ſweet ſavour to God of true Holineſs*, and Piety, *in them that periſh, even as in them that are ſaved*.

Iſa. 49. 3, 4.

The glory and happineſs ſhall accumulate upon themſelves, though it redound not on the Nation: God makes them of themſelves, as it were, *a great Nation* in the bleſſedneſs of Eternity; as he promiſed *Moſes*, if he would have been contented with the deſtruction of that preſent Nation of *Iſrael*. They are reckoned as a Nation by themſelves, and not of that Community that periſhes: For as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *The Lord knows how to deliver the Righteous out of Temptation*, and ſo out of the Infamy of a common corruption, and eſpecially that everlaſting contempt; and *reſerve the wicked* to ſwallow it wholly in themſelves. *Their Reproach their Lord will return upon them for ever, it being turned off from himſelf and his Servants*.

But though there is an infinite wiſdom in the Divine Judgment, in reſcuing thus his own Glory, and the Glory of his Servants that have been unſucceſsful in *turning men to righteouſneſs*, while they have been faithful with all their *Talents*, and *in all their Houſe*; yet the ſalvation of Men and Nations, is the plain and manifeſt glory of God,

and

and of his moſt Eminent Servants. Thoſe that are their Converts, are their *Hope now*, and *their Joy, their Rejoycing, their Crown of Rejoycing in the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming in that day*; only thus Men of eminency, in holineſs, are ſecur'd againſt loſs, if they ſave only their own ſouls, while they *endeavour the good of many, that they may be ſaved*; they are Crowned with thoſe whom God hath given them, as Children, by being inſtruments of their Converſion. On the other ſide, they are aſſur'd of their *reward with God* in them that periſh. 1 Theſ. 2. 19, 20.

But further, Every man that is good in a Nation, though his Intereſt be private, may like the *one poor wiſe man*, have done all he can to ſave a City, and therefore ſhall not be *forgotten* here. If he be a holy, good man, he will not be loſt by being alone, nor overſeen by being low in the world, though he be but *one of a Family*, or *even of a City*, yet *God will bring him to Zion, the City of the living God*. Every one ſhall with *Daniel* ſtand in his *own lot*; proportionable to what it was here, it ſhall be in that future ſtate. *God will ſeek his Sheep out of all places whither they have been driven in the dark and cloudy day, though but the poor of the flock*, and they ſhall *ſtand at his right hand at that great Diviſion of the Sheep from the Goats*.

To conclude this Particular, The honour of Nations themſelves, as well as perſons, wherein Religion hath prevail'd to ſuch degrees, as to be called *National*, is conſerv'd in thoſe that are ſav'd, even as the honour of the *Angelick nature* is conſerv'd in the *holy and elect Angels*, as the humane nature in the *ſeed of Abraham, the father of the faithful, of them that are ſaved in all Nations*; as in *Iſaac*, *the ſeed of Abraham* is called, as in *Iſaac's children, the children of promiſe are counted for the ſeed*. Thus the honour of particular Nations is treaſur'd up in the *elect* of it; ſo that if we ſuppoſe a Nation without Converts, it is loſt, as to happineſs, or as if it had not been, as the *Tribe of* Dan *has no name among thoſe ſealed Tribes*, to which we had relation before: And as the order of each *Tribe* is diſpoſed according to the happy memory of the worthies of *every Tribe*, and their more noble Acts, in, or for the True Religion (as is obſerved by Interpreters): and as there are degrees of Glory to every Chriſtian, according to the excellency of his Graces and ſervices that *abound to his account*; So the caſe is with Nations and Generations, the more, and more eminent men any hath brought forth, the more it ſhall be adorn'd at that day. Rom. 9. 7, &c. Rev. 7. 5, &c.

Isa. 62. 3. 5. It becomes a *Diadem* and *Crown* in the *hand of God*, and is, *as the Prophet* expresseth it, *as a Bride married by the multitude of her sons*: So that the last Glory and happiness of Nations is very greatly concerned in their *common Faith* and Religion, and the neareſt participation they have been capable of in one anothers holiness and piety; and therefore the more they can do to inlarge and increase it, the more they add to the *common glory* and *salvation*, and do most ensure their own.

On the other side, Although there be a lessening of honour to a Nation, by the fewness of those that are *saved*, and in the *many* of those that *perish*; yet it is not so, as that the Glory is counter-ballanc'd by the disadvantage; for there is a much higher account of Glory to the Goodness, Grace and Mercy of God, to the salvation of Christ, in that excellent state of Gods Creation, in the *elect Angels*, and the *recovered parts of mankind*, in that *new Heaven* and *new earth*, *wherein dwells righteousness*, than there is depression of that Glory in those that *perish*, and their contrary state; so the the Glory of the *Angelick* and *humane nature* it self, and so of Nations, is more conserv'd in those that *are saved* of them, than in those of them that *are lost*; for there is a much more, a *much higher reign* of *righteousness* and *life* asserted by the *Apostle*, than of *sin* and *death* although Scripture, and general observation give reason to fear there are more that *perish* than that are *sav'd*; and however we cannot unfold the mystery of it.

Rom. 5. 17.

This then stands as an impregnable argument for *National Religion*: If it conduces so much to the future happiness and salvation of Nations, and so to the more exalted Glory and salvation of all those that are zealous herein: and both these in a more National visible way than things are transacted before our eyes in this world, but that there shall be some such future state, whether at the the *day of Judgment*, or throughout Eternity, we cannot define; yet that it shall be, cannot be denied, when so much of Scripture, so much of Reason concur in it: and so on the contrary, that the irreligion of Nations towards the *true God*, and *Jesus Christ*, *whom he hath sent*, shall be revenged by the most sensible, apparent infamy, contempt and wrath *from Heaven*, in which, those that have had the most *malignant influence into such irreligion*, shall have a *double measure*: and all this in a National way. I know not what can perswade more to National Religion than so great a consideration. And so I finish this fourth Argument.

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The Fifth Argument for National Religion, ſhall be only a complication of conſequential benefits flowing from true National Religion united in, which may indeed be made uſe of to perſwade union in Religion, whether true or falſe; yet they are only applicable upon true Reaſon to the true Religion. *Argum. 5.*

1. National Religion contributes to the moſt happy ſtate, peace, and union of Nations: *Jeruſalem* by virtue of its National Religion, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, was as a *City compact together*; now that which hath a fitneſs and aptitude, by the very law of Nature and the reaſon of things, to ſtrengthen and corroborate a Nation, may very juſtly be choſen by it for its own conſervation and happineſs, upon that very account; but eſpecially when it is ſubordinated to better reaſons too, and of a much higher nature: Every one therefore ſhould give the advantage to National Peace by conſenting in National Religion; ſo that we loſe not the truth of Religion, for the ſake of National Peace, which may be ſuppoſed too to riſe from a National Religion, though falſe.

But National true Religion is a means fitted by God to the peace of Nations, and ſuch a means as is *acceptable and well pleaſing to him.*

First, For the ſake of Religion; for Unity in Religion gives excellency to Religion, and makes all the ſervices of it more acceptable, as I have already ſhewn: It is alſo *well pleaſing to God*, as it cements the peace of Nations; which is of high price with the *God of peace*, and Chriſt *the Prince of peace*, who hath commanded us to *ſeek peace and purſue it: To ſtudy to be quiet, to live in peace, as much as lies in us, and if it be poſſible with all men*; who hath branded *the ſowing diſcord among Brethren*, as one of the principal Abominations to him, but hath bleſſed the *peace-makers, owning them as his children.* He hath made *truth and peace the ſtability of any time*; *theſe are the pillars that are the Lords, and he hath ſet the Nations he loves upon them. Behold how good and how pleaſant it is for Brethren to live thus together in Unity: It is like the precious Oyntment of the Sanctuary, and the Dew of Heaven*, where it is found; *the Lord hath commanded the bleſſing, even life for evermore.*

1 Theſ. 4. 11. Rom. 12. 18. Prov. 6. 19. Mat. 5. 1. Pſalm 133

Thus Religion, by being National, is freed from the charge of being a deſign and occaſion of diſturbance.

Thus the *Hearts of Princes ſafely truſt in it*; thus it becomes the very ligament and ſinews of Government, a *pia mater* to the ſacredneſs of Authority, and makes Soveraignty eaſie and ſweet both to Prince and people.

What but Truth can be weighed againſt this Peace?

And that not all Truth, but Truth dwelling ſo near the eſſence of Religion, the very purity of Divine Worſhip, that as it cannot be *ſold* nor *parted with*, ſo it may not be concealed: A man may not *have it to himſelf*, but with his *Mouth muſt make confeſſion of it to ſalvation.*

2. True Religion becoming National, hath the defence and ſecurity of National Wiſdom, Force, and Strength, againſt falſe Religion, and its force and endeavours to expel the true, and become National it ſelf. For *a Nation divided againſt it ſelf in Religion, how can its Religious Intereſt ſtand?* When though the main be agreed, yet if diſferences of an under nature are managed with high exaſperations, it muſt needs endanger the ſtaple Religion it ſelf, by weakning, diſpiriting, and dividing the ſtrength that ſhould ingage for it, while every one takes care for his private ſentiments, and is jealous of being undermined, or oppreſſed in them, the publick and common Religion cannot be environed and defended with that vigour and union.

A Nation united in Proteſtancy, is the greateſt Bulwark againſt Popery; what can ſingle Intereſts do in this caſe? Even Experience teaches thoſe that diſſent from one another in many things, (even in National Reform'd Religion) to acknowledge this Union the Fort-Royal againſt the hoſtile Invaſions of Popery, which ſhould conciliate them as far as is poſſible among themſelves.

3. True Religion, as it is National, ſecures beſt againſt thoſe undermining Enemies of *Atheiſm*, *Hereſies*, *Enthuſiaſm*, wild and monſtrous Opinions, Prophaneneſs, neglect of all Religion, Coldneſs, Lukewarmneſs, which take ſhelter and manage their defence from the diviſions in the Religion of a Nation, ſetled and confirmed into avowed Sects and ſeveral parties; but National Union in a true Religion, ſtrikes them both with fear and ſhame.

4 The benefits and bleſſings of publick Religion, as before declared, come down upon a Religious Nation, and all the truly Religious parts of it, both in *this world, and in that which is to come*, according to the ſtrength of the Union in National Religion: And this is an intereſt far greater than that of Trade, warlike Defence, or the policy of Cities or Kingdoms. Accurſed therefore be that Irreligion or Diſunion that enfeebles it: *He that lives without God in the world*, as to the worſhip of him, and he that prodigally commits waſte upon a Religious Principle, is worſe than they that by riotous

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living or idleneſs, do their part to impoveriſh a Nation. He that upon Diviſion retires from the publick Religion without neceſſity, takes his Intereſt out of the National Bank or bottom, or ſullenly lets it lye dead: Such kind of partyings in Religion without neceſſity, are like the *Hetæriæ* or Cabals in Civil Government, Conſultations without reſpect to the publick, and ſo the great damage of it an injury of great guilt, ſeeing we owe ſo much to the publick.

And ſo I have done what I intended in the arguing this point: I ſhall now conſider what may be objected to it, as an occaſion further to explain this whole Doctrine; and the great Objections I can conceive in prejudice of what I have aſſerted concerning National Religion, I reduce to theſe following.

Obj. 1. When God gave the great inſtance and pattern of *National Religion*, eſpecially as in a *National Church*; how much otherwiſe did he found it, than is poſſible to be derived from our Saviours Inſtitution. He begun it in a holy Root, that ſprouted out and grew, and flouriſhed into a Nation *holy to God*. By his appointment they met together at *Jeruſalem*, in the *ſolemn Feaſts* and *Sacrifices*, as *publique Ordinances*. The *Prieſts*, and more eſpecially the *High-Prieſts*, were in moſt Authorirative Deputation from God, between him, and that peculiar people, that they might unite all as in *One*. The *Temple*, *Altar* and *Holy of Holies*, were as the common Center of all the publique worſhip; and a great ſin it was to have multiplied any of theſe, and ſo to have made a Diviſion.

They had *Prophets*, who were their extraordinary *National Miniſters*, their Office and Sermons cloſely relating to the general ſtate. Laſtly, their *Civil Magiſtrates* were under the ſtricteſt obligation, to attemper their Government and Adminiſtrations to the Religious Laws, given by God to that people.

Beſides all this, they had the *Levites* diſperſed through their Cities and Villages, to teach, and inſtruct in the *Synagogues*, the places wherein they aſſembled for conſtant exerciſes of Religion. But now what a ſilence is there of all theſe things, or any thing like them, with relation to Nations in our Lords appointment? His *Apoſtles* called men out of *Judaiſm*, or *Heatheniſm*, the then Religion of Nations into private and particular Aſſemblies, called Churches, under Paſtors particular to them, without any Rules for Chriſtian Magiſtrates, or expectation of ſervice from them; which argues, he did not intend *National Churches*; or if he did by the *Prophets* ſignifie any ſuch, it was not intended they ſhould

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be in this dark and cloudy ſtate, wherein *Antichriſtianiſm* has ſo prevailed; it is reſerv'd for ſome more glorious State of the Church, ſome more eminent appearance of Chriſt, wherein ſuch *Prophecies* are to be fulfilled.

2. Hence it came to paſs, the only Inſtances we have in Scripture, of Chriſtian Societies, the diſcourſes of them, the Rules in relation to them, are all fitted to private and particular Congregations, and where there are any ſuch ſpoken of, they are called Churches or Congregations; ſo that there is no Aſſociation in Chriſtian Religion mentioned, but under the name of a Church, to ſignifie Chriſtian Religious Societies, and Churches, are all one; ſo that there can be no National Chriſtian Religion, without a National Church: But there is no rule either of a National Chriſtian Religion in the New Teſtament, or a National Church.

3. A National Church, or a National Religion, muſt depend upon a National Magiſtracy; the Church muſt be gathered in them, the Religion eſtabliſhed by them ſubject to their Laws and penal Statutes; and beyond this, thoſe that cannot be every way compliant with the whole *National Scheme*, are looked upon as enemies to, or diſturbers of the peace and Government of the Nation, becauſe the Government and the Religion are incorporate together; whereas the Laws, and Religion, and Churches of Chriſt, are all in him, and depend upon him only; how far is this from a National Church?

To give firſt an anſwer to theſe Objections together: The Arguments already mentioned do mightily prevail with me that it is impoſſible Chriſtianity ſhould by any of its influences, ſo much as ſuſpend ſo abſolute a Natural Duty upon mankind as this, *viz.* to conſecrate National Aſſociations to God in National Religion, but that it is always the duty of Chriſtian Magiſtrates and people to unite in National Chriſtian Religion; Or that the Redeemer of mankind ſhould cut off ſo great a priviledg of Nations as that, to intitle themſelves *Nationally* to God, and his favour and bleſſing, and to make profeſſion of the wiſeſt and only true Religion in the world; or that the very proper and natural Glory of Chriſtianity, *to make diſciples of all Nations*, may not at all times be endeavoured by every particular Nation. However the *Prophecies* may be more literally fulfilled hereafter in the purity and univerſality of Chriſtian Religion.

This being premiſed, I come more particularly to give anſwer.

1. Many

1. Many of theſe things that are named, as found in the *Church of the Jews*, as a *National Church*, were not yet the Eſſentials of a Church, as *National* in general, but of that *particular National Church*, and typical of things under the Goſpel, as is plain in the expoſition of them in the *New Teſtament*; and more particularly that excellent *Epiſtle to the Hebrews*: the *Temple*, the *High Prieſt*, the *Holy of Holies*, the *Altar*, the *Sacrifices*, the *ſolemn Feaſts*, with ſuch like, *ſerv'd only as ſhadows of things to come*; and the want of them argues nothing againſt National Religion.

2. Thoſe things that were not Typical, or whoſe main and ſole intention was not to adorn and compleat that whole Frame, but reſted upon Univerſal Principles of Reaſon, Truth, and Duty, can never be abrogated, but are *for our learning*, that we through *patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have National hope in God*, and be obliged in our duty, even as they were. Thus the duty of Magiſtrates and people towards true Religion, of publick inſtruction, of publick Miniſters of Religion, of care for places of meeting for Divine Worſhip throughout a Nation, continue ſtill, and need no new commands in the Goſpel.

3. As to the firſt planting of Churches by drawing Chriſtians into particular private Societies, it amounts but to thus much, that Chriſt the Lord of the Church did not found his Church univerſal as neceſſarily diffuſing it ſelf into Nations; nor could it in reaſon be ſo.

For ſeeing it was in Divine Providence, for great and weighty Reaſons, of which it is not proper now to ſpeak, intended and ordered, that hundreds of years ſhould paſs over Chriſtianity, ere it had the favour and protection of Supreme Chriſtian Magiſtrates, there muſt have been for that ſpace no Religion or Church, if there had been no other Form but National. The Church of Chriſt therefore, though it was in thoſe days within Nations, Cities, Towns, and Villages, yet of low ſtature in compariſon of National Religion, till the Reign of Chriſtian Emperors, conſiderable indeed in it ſelf, and its diffuſion through ſo much of the world, but not acknowledged by Laws or Governments, till long after its firſt entrance. And at all times upon the change of a Chriſtian Magiſtracy into a Pagan, an Apoſtate, an Heretical, or Idolatrous Succeſſion, or the complex of all, *Antichriſtianiſm*, which early invaded the Church, and even covered and obſcured it in ſucceſſion of time; the Church of neceſſity muſt fall back into ſuch a low ſtate, and ſubſiſt

ſiſt upon its obedience to the Law of Chriſt, and its own prudential accommodations to the ſtate of Times, without the Magiſtrates care and protection.

Our Saviour therefore took care of the Catholick Church, which is of abſolute Divine Inſtitution, which is founded in that promiſe, *The gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it:* To which belong primarily all the great and glorious expreſſions of Scripture; to which are given originally *Paſtors and Teachers*, to propagate, promote, build up, and ſtrengthen it; and ſhall by virtue of *Chriſts aſcenſion far above all heavens*, be certainly continued to it, *till we all come to the unity of the Faith of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the full meaſure and ſtature of Chriſt* in all his members. All other Societies of Chriſtians are but little images and repreſentations of this, in theſe its excellencies; and the more they participate of it, the more truly are they the Churches of Chriſt; But becauſe this is too diffus'd for one Model, for one Frame to comprehend, there is therefore allowance given by Chriſt for leſſer Aſſociations of this Catholick Church, from the nature of the thing, and becauſe of the diſcountenance of Nations and worldly powers at firſt, and ſince upon true Chriſtianity: Our Saviour therefore, *Matth.* 15. 18 *&c.* expreſly fixes the promiſe of his Divine Preſence in the ſmalleſt parts of this Church, where *but two or three are gathered together in his Name*, he hath aſſured, *he will be in the midſt of them*; ſo that it is hence evident, the whole neighbouring diſcourſe centers in the leaſt Aſſemblies agreeing in Chriſtian Religion: For though it ſuppoſes firſt a greater number, (*the Church*, and *two or three Witneſſes* being contradiſtinguiſhed) yet as it were in proſpect of the great fewneſs upon ſome exigencies of Chriſtians practiſing the duties of Chriſtianity together, it brings down the promiſes of Audience in their appeals to heaven, and preſence with their whole worſhip and ſervices to the ſmalleſt numbers, not by way of limitation to, but encouragement of ſo ſmall a number. And it is very obſervable, the very ſame declaration of Chriſt to the Apoſtles, *whoſe ſoever ſins you remit, or bind*, by the true Doctrine of the Goſpel, *ſhall ſtand good in heaven*; the very ſame is ſaid here to the ſmalleſt Societies of Chriſtians as to their Judgment and determination upon their own members, according to the Laws of Chriſt concerning the offences that fall out among themſelves, having the ſame Doctrine to proceed be committed to them, even as to the Apoſtles themſelves: Churches

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es are *Pillars* and *Rocks of Truth*, even as the moſt Excellent Miniſters, and either, or all being no more, but *Præcones*, each in their kind, or Publiſhers of the Will of Chriſt, and his Truth declar'd in his Word, in the vertue of their being parts of the Catholick Church.

Now the Reaſon why our *Saviour* pitches upon ſo ſmall a number of *Chriſtians, agreeing*, is certainly this, becauſe he would appoint no other form to his Church, than ſuch as could live, as could ſubſiſt under any Civil Government whatever, whether friendly or unfriendly to it. He gave it no other ſhape, but what it might attain and keep under any ſtate of Civil Laws, under any enmity it met with in the world.

And this was moſt neceſſary, becauſe the Church of Chriſt was not confin'd to one Nation, as the *Jewiſh* was, whom God in a peculiar manner ſingled out, and manag'd to the ſtate of a Kingdom, and Nation, by a mighty power, and out-ſtretched arm, and conſerv'd by the ſame, ruling it with an immediate ſenſible preſence, after he had form'd it by preciſe Laws, and ſetled the juſt bounds of all Officers in their Office, and appointed them the place of the exerciſe of it; whereas the Chriſtian Doctrine being indifferent to every Nation under Heaven, it did, as it made its progreſs, convert certain numbers to it ſelf at firſt, which had no priviledg of humane Laws or Powers, but the edg of all turn'd againſt it; ſo that the Form of Churches was compoſed to all the viciſſitudes of Providence they were to undergo; and that in all reaſon, muſt be in caſe of neceſſity, the very leaſt of Societies of Chriſtians, *Two, or Two or Three* (as our Saviour ſignificantly points upon ſmall Societies) for ſuch are moſt fitted to the worſt of conditions that could befall; leſſer, and ſingle bodies moving every way, and ſhifting for the gaining opportunities for the aſſembling themſelves, and preſerving their relation one to another, in the diſcharge of mutual duties, much more eaſily than any greater aſſociations could; for our Saviour intended all for uſe, not for Form; he minded not *Nominal, Titular Biſhops* and *Churches*.

Thus far I have pleaded the appointment of Chriſt, that the ſmalleſt numbers of Chriſtians may agree and aſſociate, and be aſſured of his preſence.

But now, that this appointment is in bar of greater Societies of Chriſtians, is by no means to be granted; for it is moſt apparent, our Saviour deſign'd all things under the Goſplel ſhould be

reſtor'd to the Law of Nature, and the true Reaſon of Things.

Now according to that, the firſt End of all Society, is the enjoyment of True Religion, in more than ſolitude.

This deſire of enjoying true Religion in Society, extends it ſelf from the leaſt of Societies, to the greateſt, that are not too great for the Ends of Society: Our Saviour therefore, as he gave no Frame of poſitive Laws, or Worſhip, no *Pedagogy* of Precepts, ſo no Inſtitution of Bounding Churches, but that in caſe of ſtraits and exigencies his true Religion may be adminiſtred in the very ſmalleſt of Societies with confidence of his Favour and Preſence; when it hath freedom, it may enlarge it ſelf further and further; and if it have favour of Nations and Governments, aſcend to the greateſt; yet with this reſerve, That if in any time or place National Chriſtianity varies from the true Original Chriſtianity, as often it hath been found to do; ſo that it cannot, even in ſubſtantial things, be conſented in with a pure Conſcience, privater Congregations, even to the moſt particular, are always ready for Chriſtians to retire into; for ſo the Laws of Nature allow, where the Publick is not ſafe; and yet when the whole is not corrupted, nor liberty of joyning without commixture with thoſe Corruptions denied, there may yet be, there ought to be no Separation.

Thus the greateſt Societies are not in bar of the leaſt, when True Religion requires them.

Thus the leaſt are not in bar of the greateſt, when Chriſtianity is at full freedom; for it is cloſely allied with that *Wiſdom, whereby Kings ought to Reign, and Princes to decree Juſtice; by which Princes ought to rule, and Nobles, yea all the Judges of the Earth, with that Wiſdom, which rejoyces in the Habitable parts of the Earth, and hath its delights with the ſons of men.*

Prov. 8. 15, 16,

I have therefore before obſerved, That Chriſtian Religion at the very firſt joyn'd it ſelf, as near as it could, to all Humane Societies made ready to it, as Families, Villages, Regions, and ſo far as the Rage of Perſecution would permit Chriſtian Societies, united themſelves unto Diſtant and National Correſpondencies among themſelves.

Now it hath been ſo unhappy indeed with the World, that in few Inſtances there hath been a Good State of National Religion to yield a full, conſciencious Compliance with. Yet this will no more argue againſt the Thing it ſelf, than it does againſt any other of the wiſe and good Ordinations of God, or againſt the *Jewiſh Church*;

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ſo immediately govern'd by God, and yet ſo often, and ſo notoriouſly corrupted in *Judah*, and more generally in the *Ten Tribes*; and yet to ſhew how, to the very utmoſt, without following a multitude to do evil, we ought to joyn with any that are good in a Nation, and with any thing that is good in National Religion, when *Elijah* had, as it were, deſerted his place, and the good influence his being in publick might have had, and that God found him alone; He did by way of Reproof ask him, *What he did alone in the Wilderneſs*, and inform'd him of a greater number that had not *bowed to Baal*, than he knew of, with whom he might joyn himſelf. 1 Kings 19. 9.

If Corruption would argue againſt any good Appointment, or Ordination of God, it would argue againſt *Churches* of the very *firſt Form*, or *Conſtitution*; thoſe *Churches* in the *Revelation*, whoſe Corruption is ſeverely tax'd and threatned, yet are without any Cenſure as to their Conſtitution; and while Separation from thoſe Churches is not ſo much as intimated, yet a Separation from Impurities is highly commended, and promiſed reward. *Thoſe Names in Sardis, that had not defiled their garments*, are aſſured they ſhould *walk with Chriſt in white*, for he judg'd them *worthy*. Rev. 3. 4

From whence I conclude, no Form of Churches can recommend things diſagreeing from the word of God, how truly form'd ſoever thoſe *Churches* be; for Churches are conſtituted for joyning in thoſe things that are agreeable to the Will of Chriſt, not in thoſe that are not; and yet Separation from Corruptions does not neceſſitate Separation from *Churches*, while there are any Parts of Divine Truth and Worſhip preſerv'd pure to unite in; ſo great are the Obligations that lye upon all ſincerely Religious, to make true Religion as publick as they can in the ſeveral Societies that are found to ingraft it upon.

Now that every Society, that is the ſeat of True Chriſtian Religion, is in the language of the New Teſtament, A *Church*, I allow, and therefore will briefly inquire into the Scripture-notion of a Church.

And I find the Original word taken out of the *Septuagint* of the Old Teſtament, which tranſlates the *Hebrew Kahal* by Εκκλησια, which our Tranſlators in the Old Teſtament, as generally render *Congregation*; although in the New Teſtament, what is in the quotations out of the Old Teſtament in the *Greek* Εκκλησια, they render *Church*: ſo that from the whole it is very plain, as the

Universal, or *National Assembly* of the people of *Israel* was called Ἐκκλησία, or the Church, as by St. *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 38. where he speaks of the whole Body of the *Israelites in the Wilderness*: so *the Universal Assembly of Christians*, consider'd as in the Catholick Church, is call'd by our Saviour and the Apostles Ἐκκλησία, that is, *The Congregation*, by way of Eminency, as Holy Records are *The Scripture* or *Writing*, and the Volume of Scripture, *The Bible* or *Book*, as the glad tidings of Christ, are the Εὐαγγέλιον, the *Evangil*, or *Gospel*; so the Church is *The Congregation*: And as lesser Congregations of that Church of the *Jews*, that did not comprehend the whole Body, are call'd *The Congregation*, or Church; even so lesser Societies of Christians are call'd *the Congregation*, or Church; in allusion to which our Saviour says, *If two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them*.

συναγωγὴ a word of like Importance.

So that the Universal συναγωγὴ of Christians seen only together by God; and particular Assemblies of Christians, that meet together under each others eye, are in the phrase of the New Testament, *Churches*. Even as the *whole Assembly* of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, when they were all under one view is by St. *Stephen*, as I observ'd, call'd the *Church*; and the *Congregations*, after they were become a Nation, though they could not all then meet together, are call'd the *Church* also, because they were all under one Law and Institution, all partakers of the same Rights and Priviledges, and so indeed all *particular Churches* of Christians are but the *Catholick Church* in lesser Associations, as the circumference of Heaven is the same, though in so many different *Horizons*; As light is the same, though variously modell'd by its several Receptions; as the Ocean is one, by how many several Denominations soever it be distinguish'd from the shores it washes, or the channels, or other scituations it rests in; so this Church is often spoken of as *one Church*, and as several *Churches*, as the Sea is one and several Seas, they being so much every way the same, as to differ only in the Universality.

But whether a Nation united in Christianity may be call'd a *National Church*, having many dissents of opinion appertaining to it, and not possible to be decided by expres Scripture, there being no *Christian Nation* under Heaven in those days of the New Testament, wherein it was written; I shall leave wholly in the middle, and only observe two Things concerning this Controversie.

1. That

1. That there can no great matter accrue to either ſide of it, by deciding for, or againſt a *National Church.*

For allow a National Church, or if you will, a *Congregational Church, agreeing* in any thing, not agreeing with the Laws of Chriſt, or if either of them wants any thing neceſſary to our Obedience to all the Laws of Chriſt.

In the firſt of theſe Caſes, Chriſtians may and ought to retire from the Irregularities of any ſuch Church, either *National*, or *Congregational*, that they may be pure from Corruption.

In the ſecond Caſe, Chriſtians muſt find out the ways and opportunities, ſo far as is poſſible, whereby they may perform all the Duties commanded by Chriſt, though they ſeparate from either of thoſe *Churches*, no further than to thoſe ends.

But if there be a Corruption in the Main, or a Defect in the Vitals of the Doctrine, or Worſhip of Chriſt, in either Notion, or Churches that will not be upon due Remonſtrances reform'd, then if according to the Inſtitution of Chriſt, Chriſtians gather into Aſſemblies, though leſſer, though but of *Two*, or *Three*, they are aſſur'd of the Preſence of Chriſt; and no inconvenience of *Rending the Body of Chriſt*, or *making Diviſions in his Church*, ſhall condemn them; for the Society deſerted is not *his Church*, but the Society that does deſert is *his Church*, ſuppoſing it retires ſincerely in obedience to the Laws of Chriſt.

On the other ſide, Suppoſe a National Church, not of the Ordination of Chriſt in the Goſpel, as under that Name or Notion; yet if that ſtand good, which I have endeavoured to demonſtrate, that every Nation, to which the Goſpel is preach'd, is bound by the Laws of God eſtabliſh'd in Nature, and by the Laws of God and Chriſt in his Word, to plant true Chriſtian Religion upon its National Union; It will be ſtill every Chriſtians duty to joyn in, unite himſelf with, encourage and promote all that *True National Chriſtian Religion*, and not to ſeparate from it, any further than the Laws of Chriſt oblige him, that he may yield Obedience to all thoſe Laws: For it is the abſolute Duty of every member of a Nation to ſeek the Eternal Salvation of his Nation in his ſphere, as the Apoſtle *Paul* did of the *Jews* in ſo high an Orb, when he profeſs'd his *great heavineſs and ſorrow of heart, even to the wiſhing himſelf accurs'd from Chriſt, and prayed with his hearts deſire, they might be ſav'd.* On account of which, in ſo many things he became to the *Jews as a Jew*, and wrote that *Excellent Epiſtle to*

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the Hebrews; It being for that very Reason to me most probable, it was his, that he might make good all those great professions of Love to them; for though it was peculiarly directed to the Christian *Hebrews*, yet it had an aspect upon the whole Religion, and people of the *Jews*, as the scope of Adjusting all the *Mosaick* and *Jewish* Law to the Gospel-Mediation, makes plain, and so was in it self most proper for the Conversion of that Nation, as a Nation, seeing their *own'd and gloried in National Religion* truly understood, led to the *Christian Religion*, justly now to have been their *National Religion*, if they had yielded obedience to their own Laws rightly interpreted.

Now if National Religion be an undoubted obligation upon Nations, and the members of Nations, so far as it is true; Those Laws, those Officers that are, though not ordain'd by Christ, yet not contradictory to his Ordination, but necessary, according to Rules of Right Reason, to the Establishing *True Religion, as National*, must be submitted to also, upon the account, and for the sake of that *True Religion*, as *National*: But if *National Religion* wander from *Truth*, that Fundamental Liberty establish'd by Scripture, and Laws of Nature, must be always preserv'd, that I before asserted, as giving Right to retire from all Societies not united in *Truth*, according to the Degrees of their defection from it.

But for the further justifying *National True Religion*, I will in the next place observe from Scripture the Uses, and great Ends of *Churches*, and see how far National Religion may be accommodated to them.

For Churches are not therefore appointed, that men may Arbitrarily, and Fancifully chuse, which, or what sort they will be of: but that the true Reasons and Purposes of them may be observed and complied with; and they are these Three.

1. That there may be a Generation of men in the world, in the same Faith and Worship of God in Jesus Christ, according to the Scripture, however dispers'd, at whatever distance soever remote, yet united in the same Doctrine, Prayer, Preaching, Praising God in the Sacraments, and if opportunity allows and invites it, in the same actual Worship, and at all times closely compacted in a virtual and mystical Communion with one another, the same spirit running through all, uniting all to Christ, and God, and one with another, joyned in the same love, and sympathy of joy in the prosperity, and

and of ſorrow in the afflictions and ſufferings one of another, and with all readineſs in yielding the fruits of mutual Charity, Mercy and Compaſſion from one end of the earth to the other, every true Chriſtian being the compaſſionate *Samaritan* to every other Chriſtian, and not *Jewiſhly* diſtinguiſhing his mercy to his own Sect, Party, or Church; and in caſes of corruption and defection from the Laws, and Word of Chriſt, there is to Chriſtians, a mutual power of remonſtrating againſt thoſe corruptions, and that defection, by arguing, expoſtulating, cenſuring the evil of them; yea, and Authoritative denouncing the Judgment of God and Chriſt upon them; for that Charter of Chriſts, to the true Preachers of the Goſpel, to the true Churches, ſtands good as to Ages, ſo to all parts of the trne Church, *Whoſe ſins ye remit, are remitted*, &c. *viz.* by ſolemn Declarations out of, and according to the Laws of Chriſt, even to the utmoſt diſtance, wherein any rational poſſibility of extending ſuch Remonſtrances and Declarations, with ſucceſs and effect, can be found: there is not only power, but an incumbent duty to do it.

This Union now is of uncontroulable Divine Right. Thus much of National Religion, a National Church can by no means be denied to a Chriſtian Nation, ſeeing to be thus of the Church, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation: Every man that *ſhall be ſaved*, being *certainly added to this Church*, the entrances into which, in deed, and in truth, are by the ſaving Graces of the Spirit of God, and in the judgment of Charity, by a ſerious profeſſion: And this is that *Catholick Church* that comprehends all leſſer Unions, but excludes, or denies none, much leſs can be excluded by any. As therefore every one muſt be of the *Church Catholick*, and Nations ought to be Chriſtian Nations, and protect that profeſſion: So this very *Catholick Church* in every Nation, where it is truly found, carries with it the name of a Church; and as a Nation is by it ſelf, and its own Civil Union, denominated a Nation; ſo the union of Chriſtians muſt be the Church in that Nation; for it is the *Catholick Church* in its univerſal diffuſion, running through this, or that particular Nation, and all the vertues and duties of the Catholick Church ought to be exercciſed in it; and if any one denies this, he denies the Catholick Church of greater moment than any particular Church can be.

2. All the cloſeſt and moſt conſtant exerciſes of Chriſtian Religion, that Chriſtians are to exerciſe one with another, that cannot be

be exerciſed but in Society; of this kind, are all parts of the publick worſhip of God, Prayer, Preaching, Sacraments, which are indeed, or ought to be the ſame for nature throughout the whole Chriſtian Church, but muſt be actually perform'd in particular Societies: Now theſe Churches may be ſolemnly erected, and conſtituted by *agreement*, but they are alſo founded, and even grow out of the very nature of the thing: for the cloſe Neighbourhood of Chriſtians one with another, they having continual knowledg of, and acquaintance one with another, and thereby daily opportunities of agreeing in that publick worſhip of God, and their common profeſſion, all theſe ingage, and alſo incline them to unite, whether in greater *Families*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Churches in the Families of Chriſtians*, or in Villages, or in greater Congregations of Cities, one or more; ſtill the obligation is unavoidable: The neceſſity of Duty that lyes upon Chriſtians to perform theſe Acts of Worſhip in Society, and the Law that is upon all Society (and Societies muſt needs grow out of this frequent converſation) to dedicate it ſelf to God, make it abſolutely neceſſary, that from the neighbourhood of Chriſtians ſhould ariſe particular Churches.

And who then can deny, but that there may be an Union, and further, that there ought to be an Union of a Nation, agreeing with it ſelf, as in the ſame Government, Laws, National Conſtitutions, and commerce in a more frequent and free converſation one with another; ſo in Religion, when the parts of it profeſs the ſame true Religion, and deſire to worſhip God in the moſt publique way they can? or who can deny, that a Nation may give name to a Church, ſeeing the very Cities give name to Churches, where there was a number of Chriſtians, acting together according to the Laws of Chriſt, given to his Church?

The obligation to true Religion, to publique Religion, is undeniable. The opportunity of agreement is the ſame, and may be tranſacted in the ſame mannner all other National agreements are.

And what is a Church but a Society agreeing in all Acts of true Religion, according to the Laws allowed by Chriſt, having no other Form but that of the Catholick Church, diſtinguiſhed by the particular Societies or places where they reſide.

I acknowledg Two things are neceſſary to particular, by the nature of particular Societies, and the places where they reſided

Churches.

Churches. 1. Conſciouſneſs, or mutual knowledg of perſons and their worſhip. 2. Conſent. This our Saviour teaches in that expreſſion, if *Two of you ſhall agree*, Mat. 18. and indeed not only in particular Churches, but even in the *Catholick Church* it ſelf theſe things have their reſemblance, but with this difference: *In the Catholick Church* the Divine Spirit running through all, knows them all that truly belong to it, and every one of them, one for another; and by their true Faith they all are united in cloſeſt conſent, in all things neceſſary to ſalvation, one with another, which *Faith is kept from failing* by the ſame ſpirit in them all that are truly of it.

But becauſe there muſt be yet a more particular underſtanding, that Chriſtians have one with another, that they may joyn in the ſame Religious Acts, and mutually aſſiſt one another in them; therefore the union of the *Catholick Church upon Earth*, though it be the greateſt, the moſt Religious Society, the moſt ſtrongly banded and cemented; yet is not ſufficient, becauſe there is not that conſciouſneſs, or mutual knowledge of, and conſent in one anothers Faith and Worſhip in diſtant parts of the World, that is neceſſary to the *Glorifying God and Chriſt in particular Churches*: This is one great reaſon too why the *Church-Triumphant*, though inſeparably united with the *Church-Militant*, and every part of it, though more acceptable and prevalent in all its Adorations; yet cannot be communicated with actually, and explicitly; we may not ſollicit ſuch a communion with it here on Earth, becauſe we are not conſcious or knowing of any ſuch particularities in their State, or Action, as ſhould ground it; nor are we aſſur'd, that they are conſcious of any of our particularities: *Abraham, the Prophets* and *Apoſtles* are, for ought we know, *wholly ignorant* who we are, when we pray, or are exercis'd Religiouſly: There is a thick and dark Vail drawn betwixt the Church in Heaven and Earth, as to ſuch particular Communion; *The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit* are only certainly and particularly known to us in that Higher Region; of them we are only aſſur'd, *They know us, and all our actions.*

To aſcribe the Honour to any other of the *Inviſible Church*, is to *Idolize* them, as well as to *thruſt into things we have not ſeen or known.*

Thus freely I acknowledg, the cloſeneſs and eaſineſs of Society, of mutual underſtanding, and conſent with one another, is the

Foundation of particular Churches: Thoſe Duties of mutual Exhortation, Aſſiſtances, Counſels, and when it is neceſſary, Reproof one of another, beſides the conſtant meeting in publick worſhip; That neceſſary ſeverity of diſowning in caſes of great, or incorrigible offence, ſuch perſons as walk in practiſes contrary to the Rules of Chriſtianity; not being poſſible, but in the neareſt conjunction one with another, that the State of mankind allows at the ſame time to be, as publick too as it may be: The duties of Paſtors and Teachers towards the people, and of them towards thoſe that *are ſo over them in the Lord, which conſiſt in watching for their ſouls, as thoſe that muſt give an account for them*; and thoſe ſouls therefore yielding obedience to thoſe Rules of the Word of God, the Adminiſtring of which is ſtil'd a *Ruling*.

All theſe require a particular preſence one with another; and in ſuch a proportion of number one to another, that the principal Duties may not be defeated by the over-number, but that the ſervices of all, one to another, may extend to all, may comprehend all, may continually paſs, and re-paſs between all, and in which all may continually demonſtrate their *conſent* and *agreement*.

But yet all theſe things cannot be in bar of a National Religion, ſeeing that a Nation, as I have already ſaid, hath, and undeniably muſt have a National Union; and if True Religion be fixed there, and carried along with that Union, it may well be call'd a National Religion at leaſt, and without any injury a National Church; the Agreement in the one carrying alſo an Agreement in the other, makes it ſo. And as in ſuch a National Union, though the ſtandard of all things, as of the whole ſtate of Law, Judicature, Trade, Buſineſs, Military-ſtrength of a Nation, be preſerv'd in Capital Cities and Courts, yet by the care of Government they are all in due proportions diſtributed, as the Blood in the veins by fit Channels to every particular, as it were in circuit; ſo the publick agreement in Religion ſettles the Religious Intereſt of a Nation more eminently in thoſe things that do moſt repreſent the conſent of the whole in it; yet with due care of every part, and member of the Nation, to bring it home particularly to them, and making the mutual entercourſe in it free and open to all perſons, in all places where they have occaſion to paſs up and down, and maintain an entercourſe one with another, that wherever they are, or have occa-

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tion to be, they may enjoy the Freedom of publick Worſhip and National Religion, to which at all times they give a knowing, and even conſcious Vote that agree in it, the Aſſemblies being as it were in view, under a ſufficiency of *Maſters* of the *Aſſemblies* of the Nation together; and as National Union does not ſwallow up leſſer, or even Family Union; no more does a National any leſſer Church or Religious Society, except by mens own fault: And wherever men thus united come in the Nation, they gladly lay hold of the opportunity of joyning with any other particular Aſſembly to which ſameneſs of language and manners, give them ready admiſſion beſides particular knowledge; and that National Religion cannot be ſo very particular as congregational, is no more reaſon to deny National, and reſt wholly in Congregational, than it is to deny Congregational and reſt in Family Religion, or to deny Family and reſt in Perſonal Religion, becauſe theſe are each cloſer than other.

3. A third end of Churches comes to be conſidered, that more particularly enforces *National Religion*, and juſtifies its *Nationality*, *viz.* That there may be a more illuſtrious, famous, and remarkable offer of Religion to notice and obſervation, for the drawing in, and congregating others to it. Thus a *Church* is a *Pillar* and *Ground*, *or Seat of Truth*, and a *magnificent Houſe of the Living God*: And what more advantageous to this end, than a Nation united in the True Religion, which we know hath greatly the odds of particular Congregations, in this Illuſtriouſneſs and Magnificence? nor does this run out yet to the building *the Babel of Rome*, that would mount up as a *Tower to Heaven*; or as too ambitious *Pyramids*, that are often rebuked with Lightning from Heaven, for coming too near it; ſeeing, as I have before ſhown, ſuch an Univerſality enforced is deſtructive to all the ends of publick Religion, Humane Society being ſo bounded by Nations, though all the Treaties of Nations of the ſame True Religion, may be managed to give it the honour due to it, that can be procurated in ſuch Treaties.

So much then as National exceeds, and extends it ſelf beyond any narrower compaſs, and yet rejoyns it ſelf to and with it ſelf, after the manner of particular Congregations; ſo much does it partake of the magnificencies of Scripture concerning the publickneſs of Chriſtian Religion and the Catholick Church, and yet returns into the cloſeneſs of particular Churches with themſelves, and is the juſt point betwixt the Tyranny, Ambition, and endleſneſs of *Po-*

niſh Univerſality, and putting Chriſtianity *under a Bed or Buſhel.* National Religion, and National Union in it, is as *a city ſet upon an Hill, that cannot be hid*; as a candle ſet upon ſo exalted a candleſtick, that gives light to all within it ſelf, and about it, even as far as the Fame of that Nation reaches.

The *Churches*, much more, as riſing up into a National State, are *the Glory of Chriſt*: As therefore, though we may be in ſome regard more exact in the moſt private, we go out of our Perſonal Religion into Family Religion, out of our Family Religion into Congregational, and as the Chriſtians at firſt (moſt probably) according to the Laws of Humane Society, went out of Congregations, into Conſociation of Churches in Religion; ſo we out of all theſe where National Union in true Religion allows it go into that National State, that we may build the honour of Religion to the higheſt, in ſo ſenſible and underſtanding a Conſent and Union in it, ſo publick an acknowledgment of God; and though hereby it be as a *Net* that draws in *bad as well as good*, even viſibly and apparently; yet when we conſider the poſſible care againſt it in particular Congregations, though ſtill National, when we further conſider the ſtate of the *Jewiſh Church*, of *Corinth*, the ſtate of the *Apocalyptick Churches*, the doubt will not be ſo cogent, as to move National Religion out of the Nature of things.

The only remaining Doubt is, that thus National Magiſtracy becomes as the Head of ſuch a Religion, the National Religion is gathered and united in the Magiſtrate and his Laws, and that which ſhould only be united in, and depend upon the Laws of Chriſt, becomes ſubject to another Head; on pretence of which Magiſtrates have been attempted on too with force to bring their power to true Religion.

The Anſwer I give to this ſhall be very brief, in three Heads.

1. I always own any pretence taken from exalting *Chriſt* and his *Kingdom*, to enforce Civil Powers, to ratifie trueſt Religion into National Conſtitutions and Laws, is moſt deſtructive of the *Kingdom of Chriſt which is not of this world*, that is, to uſe force for its own promotion; and utterly ſubverts Government, ſeeing private perſons may under this ſhelter and diſguiſe, riſe up, and invade, and diſturb any Civil State or Government whatever: When Religion is our Birthright by our Laws, it may be by the ſame Laws defended; when it is not Prayers and Divine Reaſons

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are the only way of introducing it into Nations: Beyond this is nothing but Popiſh, Antichriſtian Ambition, or wild and curſed Enthuſiaſm, with all their ſalvage effects.

2. Where there is National Religion, even the National Authority is firſt Chriſtianiz'd; ſo that there is no Headſhip, no Foundation, but Chriſt and his Laws taking place upon a National State in profeſſion of him. If the Chriſtianity then be removed by falſhood taking place inſtead of Truth, the Nationalneſs ſtays; but the Religion, *the Candleſtick is removed*, the Church is departed from it, and retires where it may be enjoyed in its own Truth. The form of the Church is the very ſame with that of the Catholick Church and Congregations: As it is National, the Headſhip, Organization, is no other than National, but no more than the City of *Corinth*, or other Cities or Regions, made a Church of *Corinth*, or thoſe other Churches; no more do National Laws or Magiſtracy make the National Religion. Chriſtianity, if received, ſettles there; if not received, or afterwards expulſed, leaves Laws, Magiſtracy, Cities, to themſelves, and ſo it deals with Churches, or Forms of them, of what kind ſoever.

3. All Union in True Religion is free, rational, voluntary. It owns no compulſion of Laws or Magiſtracy, except in things morally good or evil; ſo that in this only is the difference from National Agreement in other things, that of Religion is voluntary, and by conſent. Princes and Governors may be *nurſing Fathers* and *Mothers*, by honorary Rewards and Encouragements; they may give all freedom to the true Worſhip of God, and protect it by Laws; they may fence it in with the ſtrict obſervation of all moral obſervances; they may offer, and take care for the perſwaſions of Religion to be addreſſed to all their Subjects. Many ſuch demonſtrations of their Love to true Religion are allowed by God, but *deſpotically* to command, or compel, is not of the nature of True Chriſtian, though National Religion. Chriſts *Kingdom not being of this world*, refuſes even the Magiſtrates Sword, much more that of private force, for the propagation of its moſt proper Intereſts. Our Saviours Religion hates all things of violence and cruelty, *it is not of its Spirit*, he does all by inſtruments of his own. And if Nations have made their Religion, yea the Religion of Chriſt, an eſſential of their Government; yet if it be not according

cording to the rule of Christ, Obedience to, and the good opinio- of that Government, is a lower and lesser Interest than Truth and O bedience to Christ: Christ never intended Christianity for a Politick Engine or Expedient; yet for the conservation of Government, in its full Rights, there is not a more concernful point of Christian Religion, than the whole Doctrine of Patient Suffering with its reasonableness; though it is unhappy for those Rulers, that put Christians upon the exercise of it, unhappy is that Power, that is sealed to *with Martyrs Sufferings*: Yet every man owes to God a strict account, why he is not of the National Religion; what reasons counterballance to him the great reasons given for National Religion, and therein shall receive *his Sentence from Christ*. If any, upon just reasons, desert a Congregation, though but of two or three (as I have at large set out) is a little *Sanctuary* reserved to them by Christ, with a faithful promise of his presence, where it cannot be enjoyed in greater; which are else, though with some disadvantages in all other regards, to be preferred for their publickness, and not without great reasons to be refrained from, or deserted. If the Reasons are not of weight, they stand at the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, who are guilty of a Schism against the Laws of Christianity, the Laws of Natural Religion, the Laws of Humane Society, and that according to the malignancy of it.

To draw this Discourse now to a Conclusion, let me subjoyn some Rules by way of Inference, of certain good effect, to the management of so great an Interest, as I have represented National Religion.

Rule 1. That the *Religion* offered for *National*, should in the substantials of it be all of clear, and undoubted evidence from the Word of God, and sound reason from it; and in indifferents, or necessarily adhering circumstances prepared by so publick a Spirit, as to project least of doubt and scruple; that as Articles of Faith should be so fram'd, as to beget no dividing Controversie, but leave room to the particular Judgments of Men, where points absolutely necessary are secured; so all things of external mode or form, should be so freely and generously design'd, that every mans particular apprehension may be most at liberty, without which the probabilities of the *National Religion* are surpris'd.

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Rule 2. That in Circumſtantials of Religion, what is prepared and ſetled, ſo that it cannot be alter'd by any private diſpoſe, nor allowed to any private choice, without ſcandal to the publick; Every man ſhould conſider his *Liberty of Conſcience* on one ſide, as on the other, to preſerve himſelf from ſcruple, as in the *Apoſtles* inſtance of *eating*; There is liberty on one ſide to *eat all things*, but this does not determine to a neceſſity of *eating*; that were not liberty: If therefore there be a good reaſon, an expediency *not to eat*, the liberty is more conſerv'd in *not eating* than in *eating*: So it is in the uſe, or not uſe of all indifferent things. Where then (as to the caſe we are now upon) the advantages for publique Religion incline this way, or that way, to the uſe, or not uſe of Indifferent Things, It is our greateſt liberty, to move our ſelves that way, and not to be deterr'd with the ſuſpition of the loſs of it by ſo doing.

This ſeems to be the *Prophet Zachariahs* reſolution, concerning the *Faſts*, wherein thoſe that would have them laid down, and others would keep them ſtill a foot differ'd. He firſt ſhews them of no value with God, then bids them love the *Truth* and *Peace*, *Zach.* 8. 10. For though outward Forms, Uniformity, or Variety in them, are of no account in themſelves with God, but either way in the Uniformity, or the Variety; *They that ſerve God in ſpirit and truth*, are accepted of him; yet the angry diſſents and diſagreements that diſ-joyn the minds of men, and diſable the Union of Divine Worſhip, is like *the covering the Altar with tears of complaint*, and *makes the offering unacceptable*. That there may be the Unity God is delighted in, without Uniformity, is plain by the *Harmony of the Evangeliſts*, in their *Hiſtory* of our *Saviour*, where there is perfect Unity, yet without Uniformity; it is plain too by a conſideration of Gods *ſmelling a ſavour of reſt in the ſervices of the Church* Univerſal, where there is great Variety, yet Unity. But the contentions and quarrels that often ariſe about theſe things, are the great cauſes of Gods diſpleaſure; what may moſt cure them, is then moſt to be deſired and choſen; but what that is, I will not be ſo bold as to preſcribe, whether a ſtrict Conformity, upon Reaſons in Government, beſt underſtood by Governours themſelves, or a compaſſionate Indulgence moſt acceptable to Chriſtianity.

Rule 3. They that without the violation of the true and ſubſtantial Rules of Religion, can moſt ſee, and uſe their liberty in

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theſe things, and thereby become inſtruments of the greateſt publique good, are moſt acceptable to God: They that do not *Tythe the Mint*, and Cummin of Indifferent Things in *National Religion, and Worſhip*, with great noiſe and zeal (for that is the greateſt injury can be done to it), but take them ſo far as they are inſtruments of Peace, and uſe them in their own Indifferency, for the greateſt ſervice to the publique; They that inſiſting with any ſtreſs upon main things only, are moſt earneſt in *turning many to righteouſneſs*: Theſe are they *that ſhall ſhine as Stars* in the Nations *Firmament*, if not now, aſſuredly in Eternity.

They that take advantage of the National profeſſion, *to call ſinners to repentance*, cauſe greater joy in Heaven than they that only think to ſecure themſelves with the purer Societies; Sure in this caſe God *chooſes mercy in ſeeking and ſaving them that are loſt*, rather than ſacrificing alone by our ſelves, without regard to ſuch: Chriſt choſe rather to converſe with *Publicans and Sinners*, than what look'd like purer Society, becauſe he *came to call not the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*. For the caſe was much different between the *ſcandalous* of the *Jewiſh National Church*, with which our Saviour converſed, and ſo of every *National* Church from the *Churches* gathered newly from among the *Heathen*, of whom the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, though even among them we read of no Separation from Religious Duties, but only from private converſe among thoſe that were ſcandalous, till they were as publickly diſowned, as they ought to be by *Church Cenſures*.

But on the other ſide, they are *leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, and the *National Religion*, whether Rulers or People, that diſpirit Religion by an immoderate heat for *meer Forms*; that are ſo warmly concern'd for Indifferencies, to give reaſon to ſuſpect they are a principal part in their eſteem of their own, or the National Religion: Whereas ſuch things, ſo far as they may be any way contributary to good, are beſt obſerved with greateſt ſilence and leaſt cry; being rather to be firſt ſo far prepared to acceptance and uſe, that there may be no *noiſe of Axes*, Hammers or Tools of force or compulſion about them.

Rule 4. In all Religious Duties, and the management or adminiſtration of them, there are different excellencies, like the *Pſalms of Degrees*, or thoſe parts of a *Pſalm* honoured with the *Notes of Elevation*: There will, and may be different Keys of Affection, according

according to the differing hands playing upon us. The *People hung upon Christ to hear the Word of God, for he taught them with Authority, and not as the Scribes*; yet they were bound by Christ to *hear the Scribes*. Even thus in the National Constitutions and Administrations, we may undoubtedly more warmly adhere to, and pursue the things that are *more excellent*, and with a lighter touch pass over things of less moment, though in all we mind the glory of God, and the peace of National Religion: For Union in National Religion, must be primarily and chiefly in things truly called Religion, and in lesser things with a regard to peace only. *David* was otherwise affected in *praise*, than *in sacrificing a Bullock with Horns and Hoofs*, seeing as he says, *it pleased God more*; yet in the fear of God he did *both*. The Apostle was otherwise affected in the Preaching of Christ, than when he became *as a Jew to the Jews*; yet he did the latter Religiously too: The higher and closer the Ministry of Divine Truth and Service is, the greater and closer the adherence of the Soul ought to bee: Some things *we ought to do with our might*, and *only not to leave others undone*.

Rule 5. We ought to have a steady, and certain Gage within our selves, of what *our Lord* hath provided for the preserving the truth of Religion to us, and what care he hath taken so far, as is possible, with the conservation of that Truth to give us all advantage for publickness in Religion.

As to the truth of Religion, these three provisions will secure it.

1. That no man is so much bound to any Church, Communion, Nation, or Government, as to the true Religion, which is the first, and absolute necessary; nor shall his withdrawing from any of them in things impure and offensive to God, be charged upon him as sin or Schism: All the *putting out of Synagogues, casting out Names*, or *Excommunications*, signifie not any thing where *God* and Christ are in *communion*; and where those on whom they fall are of the *general Assembly*, and *Church of the First-born*, of that truly *Catholick Church* which is the only *necessary Church* to be of, *that we may be saved*.

2. The privatest Assemblies, yea even single Souls, so retiring that they may worship God according to his word, have the promise that God and Christ *will make their abode with them, come and sup with them and they with him, and they shall be written in the writing of Gods people*: The Catholick Church is always provided for them, that they may not be out of the best Society under Heaven. The

Apoſtle encouraged the Hebrew Chriſtians that might think themſelves divided from the *Jews* that had been the only Church of God, by aſſuring them the Goſpel brought them into a greater Church than that, *viz. the General Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born written in Heaven. This honour have all the Saints of Chriſt.*

3. All the evils that can be endured upon account of Chriſt and obedience to him, will be abundantly recompenced by the ſaving of the ſoul, and that better and truer life. That Argument of our Saviour, *He that loſes his life ſaves it, and he that ſaves it loſes it: And what ſhall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and loſes his own ſoul? or what ſhall he give in exchange for his ſoul?* ſtands always *impregnable, that a man ſhould buy the truth, and not ſell it at any rate whatever.* Thus for the Truth of Religion.

2. As to the Publickneſs of Religion, there are theſe great advantages for it.

1. That Chriſtian Religion profeſſes Love, endeavour of Good, and Salvation to all men, to every Creature, and hath antiquated all that *Judaiſm*, that neglects any for their *profit to Salvation*, though but Gentiles.

2. That a man may join his Religious Services to any thing truly good in Natural or Revealed Religion, whether of Families, Neighbourhoods, Cities, Nations, or of voluntary Societies, ſtopping there, and keeping himſelf free from other mens ſins, ſo that the evil that other men adjoin to any thing true and good in Religion, being proteſted againſt, and divided from, does not corrupt what is good or true, but it may be enjoyed in the moſt publick way, while we have nothing to do with the evil, nor find it ſo mixt with the good, as to admit of no ſeparation. And what is wanting in the publick worſhip of that which Chriſt hath ordained and commanded, does not neceſſitate the total departure from that publick Worſhip, when the very Inſtitution is not chang'd by that want; for the true Chriſtian may make up that want in
Mal 3. 16. privater Duties: Thus they *that feared the Lord, ſpake often to one another*, without ſeparation from the Church.

3. There is a free uſe granted by Chriſt of all things indifferent, or a freedom on each ſides to do, or not to do, where no moral evil adheres, or diſobedience to ſome expreſs Command of Chriſts attends either part. If then Religion be not drawn out of thoſe neceſſary things wherein Divine Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Truth have plac'd it, and Traditions thereupon become Doctrines, which conſtantly carries along a *rejecting the Commands of God*, or a lower eſteem

eſteem of them for thoſe *Traditions* ſake; if there be no moral evil or indecency, nor that a too great cumber be drawn upon Religious Acts, every thing is by the Laws of Chriſt left to its own indifferency, as Reaſon invites, or perſwades on either ſide to the doing, or not doing. All which ſets men free from a *Jewiſh* yoke in theſe caſes, and is the true Chriſtian Liberty. *Eating* or *not eating, keeping a day, or not keeping it, Buying in a market, and going to a feaſt*, without asking any queſtion for Conſcience ſake, without fear of the danger of moral defilement in thoſe things that other mens ſins defile only to themſelves, if we keep our ſelves pure, are plainly the Liberty Chriſt hath publiſhed to us; *every Creature of God is pure, and not to be rejected, but received with thanksgiving*; no ſin of man can pollute it to any, but himſelf. And this conſideration may ſtate to us the whole matter, that relates to order and decency.

That order which God hath eſtabliſht in nature it ſelf that εὐχημοσύνη and τάξις, which are written with a Sun-beam upon things themſelves, are out of all diſpute. God is the *Author* of them, and not of the contrary, *confuſion* or *indecency*.

That order which is the prudential contrivance of men, though not the ſame in all places, times, and to all perſons (as the former) yet ought to be chearfully complied with, as what is neceſſary to a National union in, and adminiſtration of publick Religion, both as to Officers and Things, ſeeing nothing can be ſetled without order.

Accordingly we find the wiſe and pious Governours among the *Jews* taking care and the people ſubmitting to ſuch Ordinations, and all under Divine Approbation.

The Order that is meerly of Humane poſition, and arbitration, moves the greateſt doubt, ſtanding in things that have only the thin pretexts of Antiquity to give them ſome venerableneſs, or that they are uſages already in being, or that they add the Imaginary decency, that Ceremonies ſet out Humane actions with. Now as to this they that have the power of impoſing, are equally to weigh the value of Religion it ſelf, and what that may ſuffer for the ſake of this order, and a great account lyes upon them before God; but for thoſe that are under ſubjection, I add further,

As to this ſort of order, I can only ſay this, that ſuppoſing it no way turn'd into *Doctrine* (as the *Phariſees not eating with unwaſhen hands*) but declar'd againſt as ſuch, the conſequences of obſerving, or not obſerving, are to be ballanc'd, and ſo the pra-

ſide of every conſcientious man to be determined.

On one ſide ſtands the freedom of uſing this order, as an advantage to do good, the conſideration of the peace of Nations, the National defence made more unite againſt falſe Religion at the price of Conformity to thoſe more Arbitrary Impoſitions.

On the other ſide ſtands a juſt fear for the purity of Religion being either obſcured, or the freedom of it incumbered; or for the reputation of Religion, which often ſuffers by thoſe unneceſſary adherencies, as if they entered into the nature of Religion it ſelf.

I muſt yet allow the preference, in my own judgment, to that ſide by which National Religion is moſt ſerved; but with the full perſwaſion, that God receives both, if over-bitter zeal on either ſide be not offenſive to him; and with the conceſſion, that National Religion were more happy, if more free; but if love adjuſt to each their due allowance, the ſervices of both will be found with great acceptance in the common National Religion, as I doubt not their hands would be in the defence of it againſt the *Invaſion* of a *National falſe Religion*.

But if any be over-rigid, or ſevere on either part, they may *receive* the *full rewards* of their own ſociety, or party, but they leſſen the higher recompences of doing the moſt publique good. The ſtricteſt Laws, either this way or that way, in theſe things, are of mens own making, and exacting, ſo from them only *they have their reward*, who are zealous beyond their own *knowledg*, and the *goodneſs* of the *matter*.

From all that hath now been ſaid under this Rule, I collect,

1. That they that cannot agree to the publickly encouraged conſtitution of a Nation, ſhould yet point their worſhip, as much as they can towards it: They ſhould comply with all that is good in it, ſo far as they can be recieved, without launchiug beyond their judgments.

Thus Chriſtianity was made as publique in all places, by the Apoſtles, as they could, by adjoyning it to any principle of Truth, or to the natural ſenſe of Religion, they found any where; St. *Paul* gave ſolemn thanks to God in the midſt of all that ſailed with him, though a bad ſort of men. Thus he Preached the true God and Chriſt at *Athens* upon their *Inſcription*, *To the unknown God*, upon the Fundamentals of National Theology, upon the wiſe ſaying of a

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Poet of their own. He thought it beſt to acknowledg all that was good in the moſt faulty ſtate of Religion, as an advantage to convince what was bad, and diſagreeing to that good, and gaining men to unite with that whole element of Truth and Goodneſs, with which any ſparks kindled in them already were ſo cloſely allied, as to gain them to the whole.

How much nearer then, and cloſer may Chriſtians, and of the Reformed Chriſtianity, fall in one with another, if we valued what we agree in at a higher rate, as certainly we ought to do, then what we differ about?

2. The way to make National Religion moſt National, is by comprehending all the differences, that can be reconcil'd with true Religion; while they that diſſent in ſome things receive one another with a good, peaceable, holy, and publick temper of mind; as the great Argument and Inducement of which, we ſhould all pray for the acceptance of the holy ſervices of *all*, that *call on the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, (as the Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes Chriſtians, but immediately unites them again) *both theirs and ours:* They and we whatever ſmaller diſtinctions make the *(they)* and the *(we)* are both one in *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* We ought therefore to pray for the common benefit of all ſo united, though not bound up in the ſame form with us, for a gracious audience, and reception of their and our Worſhip of God, that ſo *the Spirit of Love and Union* in the main, may convey all our ſervices into *one before God*, where indeed (if they are as he requires) they meet ſtripp'd of all their *outward Circumſtances*, *Form*, and *Ceremony*; *Faith*, and *Obedience*, being alone able to mount thither with them: And ſervices ſo raiſed can by no means be ſpar'd for ſmall differences in a National Religious Intereſt; for the *Angels of all ſuch, behold the Face of our Father in Heaven.*

If *Darius*, though a *Heathen Prince*, had ſuch a ſenſe of the virtue of that true Religion he was not of, as to engage thoſe of ſo great difference from him in their ſenſe of God, to *pray for the peace of the King*, and his Sons; how much more ſhould we, who are all of the ſame true *Faith* and *Worſhip*, and know the *Force* and *Energy* of it, by great acts of Favour to one another, in thoſe things wherein we cannot be wholly one, yet all *joyn in praying for the acceptance of one anothers ſervices*, and the *ſervices of the whole Nation*, whereof we are not only Civil, but *Religious Members:* And if we are truly Religious, ſhall be ſo accounted with God, yet with the abatement Ezr. 6. 10.

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of our ſinful differences and diviſions? How ſhould we therefore unite, *that we may loſe none of the things that we have wrought, but may receive a full reward?*

Rule 6. It is the happineſs of our *Nation*, that if any man truly underſtands, conſiders, and pronounces of our National Religion; It ſtands *in the Scripture, making us wiſe to Salvation: In Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Repentance, Love of God, Fear of the Divine Majeſty, all Acts of Juſtice, Love, Mercy, Compaſſion, true ſincere Preaching the whole Word of God, Prayer, uſe of Sacraments, the Lords-day, Religious Diſcourſes & Conferences, Catechetical Inſtructions*, and *Education* of Youth in the knowledg of Religion; Reſtraint of *Atheiſm, Irreligion, Intemperance*, and *Senſuality*, generally and throughout the *Nation: Compulſion* of the very worſt of men, to acknowledge a Deity and his Worſhip; for what is hypocriſie in them may *turn to the ſalvation of* good men.

Theſe are the things I ſay again, that are truly our National Religion; all things pertaining to *Order*, *Decency*, *outward Form*, or *Mode*, are but the Vehicle, the conveyance of that True Religion, if the main Ends of which be obtain'd, *viz.* That theſe Religious Acts are perform'd but with that peace, and *freedom from confuſion:* Confuſion, deſtructive of all publick Actions; and with that Honourableneſs, that is agreeable to the ſtate of every Nation, and this Nation particularly in the ſimplicity of Religious Worſhip: It is enough; and whatever on theſe accounts is commanded in our National Religion, I freely own and acknowledge as reconcilable with theſe Characters, forbearing ſuch, who (though agreeing in all main things) upon ſincere endeavours to underſtand them ſo, cannot acquieſce in them as ſo, who deſerve compaſſion. Theſe things ought to be no Partition-Wall in our National Worſhipping of God one with another, nor can they without great rigor and cenſoriouſneſs very evil in the ſight of God, be condemned in thoſe, who for the ſake of Subſtantial National Religion, the publickneſs and more univerſal benefit of it, wherein they are moſt truly zealous, pay obedience to the Rules of them.

Rule 7. Let us all *ſtrive*, *labour*, *preach*, *hear*, and *pray*, and *even ſuffer* in the Reformation of our ſelves, and endeavours to Reform all others, according *to the moſt excellent Rules of our moſt Holy Religion*, profeſſed in this Kingdom as our *National Religion*; that it *may be found to Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, and be *thought worthy to ſtand before the Son*

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of Man, at his coming, before whom nothing but the Gold, and *precious Stones of Subſtantial Truth* and *Goodneſs can ſtand*, all elſe will be *burnt off*, as *Hay* and *Chaff* by the fire of that day, and they that have been hot and contentious for them, be *ſaved only as by Fire*, with difficulty and loſs.

And in the mean time, that our *Union* and *Love* in the True Religion, may be to us an aſſurance of the *Divine Favour*, and preſence; of his protection and bleſſing; that neither our *Candleſtick* may be removed, nor our Nation, *the preſent place of it*, be taken away, for generally both are removed one with the other, or ſoon after one another.

Rule. 8. Let no man be diſcouraged from the moſt zealous, Affectionate joyning himſelf to, and promoting *National Religion*, becauſe of that veneration due to the Name of *The Church* and *Churches*, according to the *Scripture*; For a *Nation* united in *True Chriſtian Religion*, differs no more in the ſtricteſt notion, from a *Church*, than a Body of men united, and conſecrated to God according to the *Law of Nature*, differs from a Society united, and conſecrated to God according to an *Inſtitution*; that is, no more than an *Inſtitution* planted in *Nature*, differs from an *Inſtitution* given by *Revelation*.

For one is the Appointment of God, *of old* from the very *Foundations* of *Humane Society*. The other after the Fall of *Nature*, and the Inability of it to its end.

An *Inſtitution* therefore does not repeal a *Natural Law*, but takes care it ſhould be fulfill'd, and compleated in its chiefeſt End.

Iſrael was a *Church* to God, being ſo devoted to him by his own *Inſtitution*; and it was a *Holy Nation*, according to the *Original* Exod. 19. 6.
Law, being elevated by the *Inſtitution*, to its true perfection, as a *Nation*.

The *Chriſtians*, to whom the Apoſtle *Peter* wrote; As they were a *Church* according to the *Inſtitution* of Chriſt, ſo they were a Holy Nation, as he ſtiles them, ſucceeding into the place of that whole *Jewiſh Nation* Conſecrated to God by the *Law of Nature* upon Nations; though but *ſtrangers ſcattered abroad*, yet to ſhow the 1 Pet. 1. 1.
great value God has of a Nation devoted to him, they are ſtiled *A Holy Nation*: The *Inſtitution* of the *Catholick Church*, as the ſeat 1 Pet. 2. 9.
of the True Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, makes a Nation united in that

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True Religion, both a *Church*, as that *Catholick Church* hath thereby a Residence in it; and much more than those fore-mentioned *scatter'd Jews* a *Holy Nation*, as it is Nationally resign'd up to God in the *True Religion*, according to the *Law of Nature* made perfect by the *Institution*.

Where then a *Nation* is united in the Truth of *Christian Doctrine*; the Purity of Divine Worship; the Holy Rules of Practise; the Catholick Love of all Christians *Baptized into the same Body*; *made to drink into that one Spirit*; In Pastors and Teachers Ministring the same Gospel, the *Apostles* infallibly deliver'd and seal'd with Miracles (All which are marks of Segregation from false Churches or Members (of the True Church) falsly so called): Here is the *Catholick Church* in a *Nation*, according to the *Institution*; and here is the *Holy Nation*, according to both the *Law of Nature*, and *the Institution*.

So again, Where a Nation brings home Religion into the most particular National Districts, or Divisions; as near as may be according to the *Institution of Christ* for particular Churches: Here is a *Nation of Churches*, which, in regard they all consent in one *National Union*, are without any impropriety stiled *A National Church*; and every such Society is both a *Holy Society*, according to the *Law of Nature* devoted to God; and a *Church-Society*, according to the *Institution* directing, and perfecting *that Law of Nature*.

Now the Institution of particular Churches by Christ, I understand to be that, where he says, If *Two* or *three agree*, and are *gather'd*, or *enchurch'd in my Name*, *I will be in the midst of them*.

Wherein he does not only encourage the smallest number in case of Exigency, or Necessity, but couches some Rules, whereby much greater numbers, whether of Christians in Separation from Civil Societies, or united according to them, are to be formed.

As first in all (excepting the Universality) that is Essential to the *Catholick Church*, which is *The Church*; of the nature of which each particular must therefore partake, that it may be a Church. 2. In a number proportionable to *Edification*, in all the Duties and Ordinances of Christian Religion. 3. In the Humility, Modesty, and unaspiringness of Christianity: For he that instituted his Churches in such small numbers, and those not forced, but *agreeing*, projected nothing by that Institution, for Domination, or Grandeur. 4. In the simplicity, and plainness Christian Religion professes; For *Churches instituted* in such a paucity of Members were never

never design'd to be Courts of *Forensick businesse*, nor capable of Subordinating themselves so, as that their Members should be Fatigu'd with long andtedious Suits and Appeals, removed from one part to another (*worse than going to Law before unbelievers*), as the *Romish Tyranny* hath contriv'd. Whereas our Saviours methods for *Complaint* and *Admonition* in case of *Scandal*; for *Reconciliation*, in case of *Repentance*; or *severer Discipline*, in case of *obstinacy*; are natural, easie, and speedy, as is plain to any observer. 5. Christian Churches allowed in *Two* or *Three*, shews the care of Christ, that there should be a proportion betwixt the strength and gifts of his ordinary Ministers, since the Cessation of the *Apostolick measures*, and their charge and trust: For our Lord would not by his Institution give any Reason to *Moses* his complaint, *I am not able to bear this great people.*

Thus was our *Saviours Institution* of *particular Churches*; and though it does not lay any absolute Interdict upon the Truly prudential, though Additional Constitutions, either of Nations, or other Humane Societies, proceeding according to the general maxims, upon which Societies strengthen themselves: yet with this Caution, that what is so done, may not enact any thing by which the main and great Ends of this *Institution* should be defeated. However that the Institution should never be pleaded, but stand free from the Errors men fall too often into, in pursuit of the Maxims forenamed; whereby they would aggrandize Society in Religious Things, or make it comport with Civil State: But that his Institution should be a standing Rule, first to avoid them, after to discover, and reform them; or if they grew extreme, and not to be reduced, as in *Popery*, to warrant a withdrawing from them.

But to apply all this to our purpose, If the main Ends of the *Catholick* and *particular Churches*, *Instituted* by our Lord and Saviour, are obtain'd; There is no Encounter, but a most happy Agreement between the *Natural Law* of *National Religion*, and the *Institution of Churches*, which, as I before asserted, are not to be drawn into a Desert, or Wilderness, or shut up in Cells and Cloysters, or confin'd to one point of the World (as the *Donatists* would have had the True Church), but are to be fix'd in the midst of the Universe, of Nations and Cities, as the very *places* of the *Candlesticks*, or *Churches* (from which in just indignation to those places, when unworthy of them, they are remov'd) in the midst of the Business,

Trade, and Converſation of the World; as is apparent by the *Churches* we read of in the Scriptures.

Let then True Religion (as Chriſtianity contended, and will at laſt, in much higher Degrees, overcome) be as wide as the Univerſe; *Let the Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and his Chriſt*; and the *Univerſal Church* will be as wide; Bring it into particular Societies, and particular *Churches* will be as many, as numerous as they.

A *Church-State* is indeed a State of Separation: the Church-Catholick is a Separation from the Univerſe, becauſe there are *Fallen Angels*, unholy, and unhappy; becauſe there is a multitude of mankind in the ſame State.

But this is only for the ſake of True Religion, and the Happineſs conſequent upon it, that there is ſuch a Separation; and this the very *Law of Nature* agrees in.

Thus particular Churches, whenever they are a Separation from particular Societies; It is for the ſake of *True Religion*, and its due Adminiſtration: Reſtore that, and the *Law of Nature*, and the *Inſtitution*, become both one.

Then a *Nation*, and a *National Church* coaleſce into one: then Civil Societies in particular, and *particular Churches* grow into one; and God is pleas'd *to dwell in them*, and with greater delight, becauſe all his *Inſtitutions Natural* and *Reveal'd* unite in one.

I have only one Caution to add, That the ſtate of Things hitherto in the world is far from perfection; that whitherſoever we look, we can't find it; ſo that to be removing from one thing to another in hope of it, is perpetually to *give* our ſelves *to change*, except Things are no way tollerable, but the very Subſtance, Rules and Principles are corrupted, and that there are no Arts of Retirement, and withdrawing from them left; we ſhould conſider how the pious *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, how *our Saviour* and *the Apoſtles*, how the *undefiled names in Sardis* mannag'd themſelves in the midſt of great Corruptions; what retreats from the Evils, and yet joyning in all that was good, was viſible in their practiſe, what kind of
1 Cor. 11. Diviſion the *good* and *approved Corinthians* made from the miſde-
19. meanors of the bad, without forſaking the Church, that we may imitate their Examples; and continue to do the greateſt ſervice to the *Churches*, or *Nations* we are members of; neither ſilencing our due Reſentments of Evil in our place and ſtation, nor rend-

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ing our ſelves from that *Body* we are of: But that All *our Things* may be done in *Charity*. 1 Cor. 16. 14.

Rule. 9. In the laſt place, let us not think, Nations and other Incorporations of mankind ſlide away with this world, and are wholly loſt in the future ſtate of Things; and that only every man ſhall *appear*, and be *judg'd* ſingly by himſelf: Our *Reſurrection*, which is the *day* of our *Regeneration*, of our *new life*, and *appearance in Bodies*, will preſent us not only ſingle, but in our ſtate of Community, wherein we were here in the world; even from Families to Nations, that *we may receive the things done in thoſe Bodies*, as well as in our *own Bodies*; then the Good we have done, or omitted to do; and the Evil we have withſtood, or been the occaſion of, or not prevented, when we might, ſhall be ſeverely accounted for by each in their ſtation.

Each *Magiſtrate* ſhall be ſurrounded with his ſphere of *Authority*, wherein he was ſet here, and *judg'd* in that: And each *Miniſter of Religion juſtified* or *condemned* in that *very Orb*, wherein he was fix'd *as a Star*. And the ſeveral Magnitudes of both *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* will then be dreadful to them; however they have coveted, and been Ambitious of them here, if they have not inlightned their whole ſpace, becauſe their *Judgment* will be *greater*. Even every man ſhall be judg'd by his Services to the Publick in his place and ſtation, how private ſoever, if it hath never ſo little exceeded his ſingle capacity. And who in his Reaſon can think? God will then account with men for *Mint* and *Cummin*, ſmall and diſputable Things, howſoever zealous, or rather fond of them they have been in themſelves, and earneſt with others concerning them: Thoſe things that have truly center'd in the *Glory of God*, and *the Salvation of mens ſouls*, *in Faith*, *Repentance*, *and a Holy Life*, in *Love* and *Peace* will be of the only moment at that Tribunal.

This therefore ſhould be the moſt powerful perſwaſive upon us, to do all the good herein we can, in that Community wherein we are fix'd, according *to our Talent*, though but a *ſingle one* (much more if our Talents have been *Two* or *Five*), that we may in that Day of *Recompences enter into the joy of our Lord.*

THE END.